

# MY THREE KEYS



MURRAY



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**MY THREE KEYS  
AND OTHER  
TALKS TO BOYS AND GIRLS**



# MY THREE KEYS

and Other Talks to Boys and Girls

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and  
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## FOREWORD

These talks have been given to boys and girls in high schools, preparatory schools, and Sunday schools, and to groups of Boy Scouts and YMCA boys. Some of them were given to soldiers in camp, and some in schools in the Near East. They are gathered together here in the hope that they may be helpful to other boys and girls who shall read them or hear them read, and that they may be suggestive to men and women who seek to influence young people through the spoken word.

My son has been so helpful in the preparation of these talks that I want to acknowledge my indebtedness to him by associating him with me in the authorship of this book.

Plainfield, N. J.

WILLIAM D. MURRAY.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD.....	V
I. MY THREE KEYS.....	I
II. THE MOTHER HEN AND HER CHICKENS.....	4
III. CHILDREN'S SUNDAY.....	8
IV. THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ.....	11
V. WHY A BOY IS LIKE A WATCH.....	21
VI. ANGER.....	26
VII. FAITH.....	29
VIII. TEMPTATION.....	32
IX. SELFISHNESS.....	36
X. OBEDIENCE.....	39
XI. LOYALTY.....	42
XII. CONTENTMENT.....	45
XIII. CHRISTMAS.....	48
XIV. LISTENING TO GOD.....	51
XV. PRAYER.....	53
XVI. THE FIRST EASTER.....	57
XVII. CHILDREN'S DAY.....	60
XVIII. RALLY DAY.....	62
XIX. WHEN JESUS CAME.....	65
XX. A BIRTHDAY TALK.....	68
XXI. SHOWING OUR LOVE BY DOING.....	71
XXII. SECRET SIN.....	74
XXIII. BY THE WAY.....	77
XXIV. A GARDEN TALK.....	79
XXV. THE LORD'S SUPPER.....	82
XXVI. GIVING UP.....	85
XXVII. OUR GUIDE.....	87
XXVIII. SEEKING HELP.....	89
XXIX. FAITHFULNESS.....	91
XXX. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.....	93
XXXI. EASTER.....	96
XXXII. THANKSGIVING.....	99
XXXIII. HEAVEN.....	101
XXXIV. GIFTS.....	104
XXXV. A MISSIONARY TALK.....	107
XXXVI. THE BIBLE.....	110
XXXVII. JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.....	112
XXXVIII. SUNDAY.....	115
XXXIX. THE SPEECH THAT NEVER WAS DELIVERED.....	118
XL. DOING NOTHING.....	121
XLI. JESUS JUDGED BY HIS DISCIPLES.....	125
XLII. JESUS IN JERUSALEM.....	128
XLIII. LOVING GIFTS.....	130
XLIV. UNSEEN HELPERS.....	132
XLV. SEEKING AND FINDING.....	134



## I

### MY THREE KEYS

ONE day I decided that the bunch of keys I was carrying was unnecessarily heavy. The keys had been slowly accumulating until there were a good many of them. There was the key to my office desk; I never needed that except when in the office, so I removed it from the ring and left it there. And here were a couple of keys to compartments in my safe; those I needed only when I was near the safe, so they, too, were removed and left near the safe. And here was the key to my suit case; why should I carry that around with me?

One by one the keys were detached from the key ring until only three were left; these three I found I had to carry. One was to the door of my house, the second was to the door of my office, and the third let me into my church. And now I carry only these three—the keys to my home, my office, and my church.

Are they not symbols of our indispensable needs? A place to live, a place to work, and a place to worship—home, office, church.

Home—a place to live. Is that all? A man can live in a house, but a home is much more than a dwelling. There is an atmosphere about a real home which we all recognize, especially when it is absent. A home demands loyalty of those who live in it; it demands unselfishness and purity of life. When Jesus described heaven He could think of nothing better to call it than "My Father's house"—the home where His Father dwelt.

The home is the foundation of the state and of society, and what the home is determines largely what the citizens will become. How often we hear people say, "Oh, he didn't have a good home." Everybody needs a home; let us try to

make our homes places where peace and happiness and helpfulness are always to be found.

The second fundamental need is a place to work, an office or a shop. This world has no place for drones—we want men who work. Work is good for us. But it should be work into which our hearts can go. Remember, we ought to be more interested in making a life than in making a living. We should, of course, be fond of our work, we shall do it poorly unless we are; but try to get work that means character building and not life destroying. There are so many kinds of work that pull men down.

A man said to me the other day, speaking of the business he was in, "It's no business for an honest man." A short time ago I heard two church members discussing business methods and both said they couldn't do their business and keep the law. When I said, "You don't have to do business, you do have to keep the law," they laughed at me. Find work that helps you to live the Christian life while you are in it.

And just as truly as a man needs a home and a workshop, he needs a place to worship—a church. We are more than mere animals: we instinctively turn to religion. All men seek the help of a higher power. In the home we cultivate the human relationships; the church gives us the opportunity of developing those that are divine.

A man with a home to live in and a place to work in and a place to worship in is pretty sure to be a good citizen, a good workman, and a good father, husband, son, and brother, provided he makes the right use of these good things.

One by one I laid aside my keys until only these three were left; so one by one we can lay aside clubs and theaters and other attractions, but never can we do without home, shop, and church.

What we need is courage to live a pure, unselfish life in the home, to work faithfully, and to worship sincerely. These then are what every man needs: a place to live in, a place to work in, and a place to worship in. He cannot get along

without them. It is easy to see how much he needs a home; we know he must work if he would live; it is harder, perhaps, to realize that he must worship. But the man who merely lives and works is little better than a machine; it is the man whose higher nature is developed by worship who can work hard and live well.

Most men if they stopped working would starve; if they had no place to live in they would perish; and just as truly unless they worship, unless they recognize the need of a supreme Being, their real life, their eternal life, will be lost. "What shall a man give in exchange for his life?" Jesus asks. Work will not save it; home will not deliver it from peril; only God can.

## II

### THE MOTHER HEN AND HER CHICKENS

It was the last Tuesday of Jesus' earthly life. On the preceding Saturday He had come up to Jerusalem with His little company of disciples. The end of His life was near at hand and He knew it. Each day He had gone into the great city with its swarming crowds; each evening He had gone back to the quiet of the home in Bethany. And at the close of the day He was on His way once more to that home; He had reached the Mount of Olives where He could look out over the restless city, and, as He looked, these words sprang from His lips and heart:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings."

It may be that on His way into Jerusalem that morning He had seen an old hen with her little brood; or perhaps at His home in Nazareth He had kept chickens himself. Anyhow, as He gazed at the great, needy city, He exclaimed, "O people, how I would like to be to you what the old mother hen is to her little chicks."

We shall understand, in part at least, what this longing of His heart was, if we try to realize why a hen gathers her brood under her wings.

I once saw a mother hen going about in a barnyard with her chicks. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, she began her cluck! cluck! cluck! The little ones ran to her as she squatted down and spread out her wings, under which they scampered. I had not seen the necessity of this action; things seemed to be peaceful and quiet. Looking up, however, I saw where the trouble was: there, floating about in graceful



circles, was the chicken's arch enemy, the hawk. I hadn't seen it; the little chicks hadn't seen it; but the watchful, loving old mother had seen it. And she gathered her brood under her wings *to protect them in time of danger*.

We are told that evil comes upon us like a lion, seeking whom it can attack. We may not realize its presence, any more than the little brood realized the presence of the hawk, but Jesus in such times of danger will be to us what the old mother hen was to her chicks. He sees the danger. He wants to protect us.

Anyone who has ever watched a proud old hen strutting around with her peeping babies will remember how, once in a while, there comes a lull in the day's occupations; the feeding is over for the present, and the old mother settles down comfortably, and the little ones are soon snugly tucked under her wings. It seems as if she realized that they had done enough and needed rest, and so she gathers her brood under her wings just to rest them. This will occur a number of times during the day, and at evening she takes them in for the night.

"Come unto me," Jesus said, "and I will give you rest." Sometimes Jesus did just this way with His disciples. One day when the crowds were pressing upon them, He said, "Come with me; let's cross the lake where there are no people, and there we can rest awhile." Today, as much as then, He wants us to go into some quiet place occasionally and rest with Him.

They tell me that the best chickens are hatched in the early spring, so that very often the weather is none too warm when the mother hen comes off her nest and begins to forage with her tender little ones. She seems to realize the danger from cold, for many a time, if you watch, you will see her gather her brood under her wings just to warm them up a bit. It's soon over and they go back to their feeding, only to come back by and by to the mother's warmth. For they are too young and featherless to stand the cold by

themselves; they would die if left unprotected by a mother's warmth; they must keep close to her to keep warm.

How true this is of us! Away from Him, who longed to be to us what the old hen is to her brood, we soon grow cold—not cold in our bodies so much as in our hearts. That is sometimes the way with a man who is greatly interested in church work. We say he is red hot. But by and by he loses interest and we say he has grown cool. Well, Jesus wants to keep us warm-hearted in His service.

But there are times when there is no danger to guard against; the little chicks are neither cold nor tired, but nevertheless the old mother hen calls them in and they cuddle down under her wings. You can almost see a look of contentment come over her as the last of the brood crawls under. I think she does it just because *she loves to have them with her*—she isn't doing anything for them; she just wants to have them all by herself.

So Jesus took His disciples now and then away by themselves that they might be alone together. And so nowadays He wants us to be with Him alone. He wants to be to us what the old mother hen is to her chickens when she just wants to feel them near her.

He was often lonely when He was here upon this earth. One day He said sorrowfully to His disciples, the men He thought were His closest friends, "Will you go away, too?" Yes, although He is God He wanted human companionship, and He longs for it now. He is anxious to have us near Him as His close friends.

It requires no theology to understand love like this, any more than it takes a knowledge of natural history to appreciate the mother love in a hen. If we can only think of our Lord as one who is as eager to protect, to nurture, to give rest to, and to enjoy His children as is the devoted mother bird, we need not bother much with the why and the wherefore of it all.

But this is not the whole word that broke from Jesus' lips

that day, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, *and ye would not.*" His willingness, "*I would,*" stands over against their unwillingness, "*Ye would not.*" The little chick who does not heed the mother hen's call when danger is near, or does not care for the rest and warmth of the mother wings, is sure to suffer. It is the little ones who trust the mother who are safe. The Psalmist put it into beautiful words when he said, speaking of God, "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings shalt thou trust."

I have read that one time a barn took fire. It was not consumed, most of it was left standing. When the fire had been put out and people could go inside, there on the barn floor they found an old hen, suffocated, and under her outspread wings, dead, of course, was her little brood. She might have escaped herself, but she preferred to give her life in an effort to save those whom she loved.

Jesus has been like that devoted mother hen. He has given His life, which He might have saved, in order that we might have life. And now He asks us to come under His wings, outspread for us.

"Under His wings I am safely abiding;  
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,  
Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me;  
He has redeemed me and I am His child."

### III

## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

ALL days it seems to me are Children's Days, but it is good, I am sure, to have one special Sunday in the year which we call Children's Sunday. I have sometimes wondered who invented Children's Day, but, when you think of it, it is as old as the Bible. Long, long ago one of the prophets said that a day would come when the streets of the city would be full of boys and girls playing. He wanted to tell about a real, happy city and so he said it would be a place where it was always Children's Day. And you remember how Jesus said heaven will be filled with children—there, too, it will always be Children's Day.

But if God thinks so much of children it means that He expects something of us. He wants us even now to do something for Him.

Dr. Schauffler tells of a little girl who ran to her mother almost crying, and said, "Oh, Mother, Charlie's setting traps for the birds." "Well," her mother said, "what did you do?" "I asked Charlie not to set the traps." "Is that all?" "No, then I prayed God not to let the birds go into the traps." "And did you do anything else?" "Yes," she said, "then I kicked the traps all to pieces." God likes to have us go to Sunday school and pray and learn Bible verses and sing our hymns, but I am sure he wants us to do something to show that we are Sunday school children.

But some of you say, "We can't do anything, we are too little." Never say that. One day some flies, little as they were, stopped a great railroad train. On the outside of the car is a box in which the wheel turns on its axle, and in this box is put the oil, which runs through a little hole to the axle as it goes round. This train was running through

swampy ground where there were lots of flies and they kept getting into this axle box and of course the oil drowned them. As they died they dropped one by one into the hole through which the oil should run and stopped it up. When the oil didn't run the axle got hot, and as it got hot it swelled, until it got so tight in the iron that it couldn't go round at all and the train had to stop. The little flies had stopped the train. A little blister in the iron in the great Tay bridge caused it to fall. A grain of sand in the valve sank a French submarine and killed thirteen people. Little things and little people do count. ✓

It's good, of course, to go to Sunday school, but it's better to do something because we are Sunday school children, however small we are.

One time there was an engine trying to pull a heavy freight train along a track that ran up a little hill, but it could only get up a little way and then it had to stop. Near by was the roundhouse. That's where the locomotives stay when they are not at work. So this locomotive on the freight train called over to a big engine it saw there and said, "I can't pull this train up this hill. Won't you come and help me?" "No," growled the other locomotive, "my work is all done; I never run after five o'clock and now it's six. No, I can't help you." Then the locomotive called out again to another big engine it saw in the roundhouse. "Say, I can't pull this train up this hill, it's too heavy for me alone, won't you come and help me?" And this locomotive answered, "No, indeed; pull a freight train! I never did such a thing in my life. I only pull parlor cars. I can't help you." There was only one more locomotive in the roundhouse, a little pony locomotive, one that was used to shift cars about in the yard. But the freight locomotive had to have help, so it called to this little one and said, "Maybe you will help me get this train up the hill. Can't you come and push?" And the little locomotive said, "Of course I'll come. I think I can help push you up the hill." So he ran out of the roundhouse and down the

track and put his head against the rear car of the freight train and began to push, and all the time he was saying to himself, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." The train began to run faster and faster and he had to say it faster and faster, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can," until at last the top of the hill was reached and the train easily ran down on the other side. Then the little locomotive backed away, and as it ran down towards the roundhouse, going faster and faster as it flew down hill, it kept saying to itself, "I thought I could, I thought I could, I thought I could." You can do it if you think you can.

#### IV

### THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ

A LEARNED professor in Michigan University once recommended to me the use of a book which I have been very glad to read a good many times. It is a storybook, too. The story begins in Kansas, where they have cyclones—those great windstorms which whirl round and round, tearing up trees and destroying houses.

A little girl named Dorothy is living in the home of her aunt Em, when one day one of these cyclones strikes the house. Round and round it whirls it, up and up and on and on it carries it, with only Dorothy and her little dog Toto in it. The journey is so long that Dorothy finally goes to sleep and is suddenly awakened when the house is at last dropped down on the ground with a thump. When she looks out of the window everything is strange; she doesn't know where she is, so she asks one of the queer little men standing there, and he tells her she is in the land of Oz. "But I live in Kansas, and I want to get back to my Aunt Em," Dorothy tells him. "Kansas, Kansas, where's that?" the little man replies. "We never heard of Kansas here."

After some more conversation one of the little fellows suggests that she go to see the wonderful Wizard of Oz, who lives at the end of the yellow path to which he points. "Perhaps he can tell you how to find the way back to Kansas," her strange little friend remarks. So she thanks him and, taking Toto and a basket of lunch, starts to find the Wizard, walking along the yellow path which leads into the distance.

As she trudges along by and by she grows tired and hungry and sits down by a cornfield to rest and eat. As she looks over the fence into the field she spies an old scarecrow stuck upon the end of a stick. You can imagine her surprise when she sees that he is winking at her. "Why," she exclaims,



"I didn't know you could do that." "Yes," says the Scarecrow, "and you see I can talk, too."

So the two fell into conversation, and this new friend told Dorothy that he was very tired, having been up on the stick so long. "If I could only get my feet on the ground," he groaned. "Why, I can help you to do that," says Dorothy, and then she lifts him from the stick and puts his feet on the ground. But he soon finds that he can't walk. How could he when he had never learned? The first thing he knows he falls all in a heap on the ground. Dorothy lifts him up again, and after considerable work teaches him to walk.

Then he asks her where she is going. She tells him how she had been carried away from her home in Kansas and set down in this strange land, and that she is on her way to see the wonderful Wizard of Oz, who lives at the end of the yellow path and who is going to tell her how to get back to Kansas. "He must be a wonderful wizard," says the Scarecrow. "There's something I need very much. This head of mine is stuffed with straw, there are no brains in it. I wish the Wizard would give me some brains, I need them very much." "Come along with me," Dorothy says, "and see if the Wizard can't help you." So the two start out along the yellow path to find the home of the wonderful Wizard of Oz.

They hadn't gone very far when the yellow path led through the woods and soon they were greatly frightened by a loud roaring. They looked over where the noise came from and saw a great big lion. They felt like running away, but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid, I'm a cowardly lion. I've lost all my courage. I don't know what to do; all the animals make such fun of me and I am afraid of them." "Why," Dorothy called to him, "come along with us. We are going to find the wonderful Wizard of Oz. Maybe he can help you. He's going to show me the way back to Kansas." "And I'm going to ask him to give me some brains in place of the straw that's in my head," said the Scarecrow. "I think he could give you some courage." "All right," said



the Lion, and away they trudged once more, Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and the Cowardly Lion, along the yellow path to find the wonderful Wizard of Oz.

By and by as they were walking along they saw over in the woods something shiny that looked like a man. When they got close enough they saw that it really was a man, a man all made of tin, standing with an ax raised up over his head as if he were chopping wood. "Who are you?" asked Dorothy. "They call me the Tin Woodman," he answered. "I used to be a real man, but one day my ax slipped as I was cutting wood and cut off one of my feet. I had to do something so I had a tin foot put in place of it. Another time I cut off one hand and had a tin hand put on; so little by little, after various accidents, first one part of me and then another has been replaced by tin, until now I'm all tin."

"But why do you stand there like that all the time?" Dorothy asked him. "Oh, I got caught out in the rain, and my joints are rusted so that I can't move them. Couldn't you get my oil can over by that tree and oil me up a little, so that I can move?" Dorothy was always ready to help people, so she picked up the oil can, and in a little while his joints were so loose that he could get his arms down and move his legs. When the Tin Woodman asked them where they were going they told him they were going to see the wonderful Wizard of Oz, who was going to do wonders for them. "Oh," he said, "there's something I need so badly. This body of mine is hollow; there's no heart in it. There's a young lady over in the village where I live whom I want to love, but how can I love her unless I have a heart to love her with? Do you suppose the Wizard could give me a heart?" "I'm sure he could," answered Dorothy, "come along with us and find out." So once more they started out along the yellow path that led to the home of the wonderful Wizard of Oz; Dorothy to find the way back to Kansas; the Scarecrow to get *brains*; the Cowardly Lion to get *courage*; and the Tin Woodman to get a *heart*.

I think the man who wrote this story wrote better than he knew, for this is more than an interesting fairy story; it is a parable. For, strangely enough, this curious company of people was looking for three things every young man needs—*brains, courage, and heart*. And while our friends are walking along the yellow path, let us see if this is not so. We will come back to them later.

Do young men need brains nowadays? Of course, everyone has some gray matter inside his head which he believes to be brains, but there are all sorts of brains just as there are all sorts of automobiles, and some are better than others. I mean brains that amount to something. Do young men need such brains? It may be you don't think you need brains very much now when you are young. You have good parents and kind friends who are using their brains for you, and you do not have to use yours very much. This may be true, but the time is not far off, a few years only, when you will have to use your brains, and now is the only time you will ever have to get them ready. When a man falls overboard it is too late then to learn to swim; he should have gotten ready for an occurrence of that kind. Unless you begin to stiffen up your brains when you are young, and keep at it, the time may come when you will have in your head, instead of good brains, only the flabby, useless stuff which cannot be relied upon when needed.

Now, early in life, is the time for you to cultivate your brains by exercising them in the right kind of a way. May I tell you one or two things that will not help you a bit? One of the worst things you can do with your brains is to use them for reading trashy literature. They seem to get used to such stuff, and it becomes almost impossible to make them enjoy good literature. I know how strong the temptation is to read stories that thrill, but you will be starving your brains if you feed them such chaff. Don't do it.

Another thing—indulgence in any kind of impurity, either in thought or in deed, has a well-known effect upon the

brains. It is this kind of thing that makes them flabby, so that they will not do their work when you want them to.

Another thing that hurts boys' brains is smoking cigarettes. Tobacco contains a poison called nicotine. Of course, there is very little of it in one cigarette, although it is such powerful poison that one fifteenth of a grain has been known to cause death. In smoking, the smoke ordinarily comes in contact with the lining of the mouth, but when a boy or a young man smokes cigarettes he usually inhales the smoke—takes it not only into his mouth, but into his lungs—which means that he exposes a surface of six hundred square feet to the smoke inhaled, and so gives the nicotine a fine chance to work. Every school-teacher who has had boys in his class will tell you that boys are dull and stupid at their lessons after smoking cigarettes. This means that the poison is working, it is making their brains dull, they don't work as they would if they were not poisoned.

If you are a cigarette smoker, just try it for yourself. Smoke five or six cigarettes and then go to work at some problem in mathematics; at some other time, when you haven't smoked, try an equally difficult problem and see which problem is the easier to solve. Then be honest with yourself.

The best way to get good brains is to give those you now have something to do that is worth while. Don't dawdle. Study when you study, read when you read, and hold your mind on your subject. Watch for times of wandering and call yourself back to your work. Cultivate right habits of thinking. Make up your mind that you will learn to do some one thing better than anyone else can do it. Why do people from all over the country travel out to that little town in Minnesota when serious surgical operations are thought of? It's because in that town there are two men who know how to do such things better than anybody else, and people want them.

But I hear some of you say, "Brains are not the whole thing." That is so. Brains can be a curse. The best brains

have sometimes been the means by which the most wicked purposes have been accomplished.

Speaking one day to the 1,500 men in one of our state prisons, I asked the chaplain if any distinguished men were there. "Oh, yes," he said, "that man over there was a congressman; the leader of the orchestra was one of our judges; that man down there was a minister in this city." No, brains alone are not enough. With brains you must have what the lion was seeking—*courage*—courage to use your brains aright. Get courage.

Now, as there are different kinds of brains, so there are different kinds of courage. When we speak of courage we usually think of physical courage—the kind the soldier or the football player has. This is good, but it is not the best. Every boy ought to be physically brave, and I think most boys and young men are.

But there is another kind of courage which is better than mere physical courage; it is the kind of courage those strong men showed on that awful night on the deck of the *Titanic*, when they stood aside to die and let the women and helpless children go into the boats to live. This is what we call moral courage—the morally brave boy is greater than the physically brave boy.

Moral courage is the kind that enables you to stand for the right if you stand alone; to despise the unclean; to play the game for the game's sake, not merely to win. Moral courage helps you to sacrifice the present for the future—and what a lot of courage that takes. We have been laughing for centuries at poor foolish Esau, who got things turned round and sacrificed the future for the present, as lots of boys and young men are doing today, simply for lack of moral courage. I remember so well those bright spring days in college when we used to see the fellows who were training for the crew getting ready for the great race in June. Oh, how some of them longed to stretch out on the grass and enjoy the warm air and the fellowship of the other boys!

But no, they must give up present ease, and down to the river they must go, day and day, month after month, for a long, hot pull. It was hard, but do you suppose they regretted it, when, with accumulated skill, they sent their boat shooting over the line a winner? Did they think then of the good times they had missed? Not a bit of it. Then I know they were glad that during those spring days they had had the courage to sacrifice the present for the future.

How many men we see about us who amount to nothing because when they were boys they did not have the moral courage to give up the temporary pleasures of boyhood, that they might get ready for future manhood! And, on the other hand, how many men there are, like Lincoln, who had the courage to give up some of the pleasures of boyhood, some of its ease, that the time might be used in preparing themselves for the future.

Not long ago a friend of mine told me of a talk he had with a friend of his who was living at a rapid pace. "I don't see how you do it, Sam," my friend said to him. "How can you eat and drink and stay up nights as you do?" The answer was, "Don't you forget that I am having a first-rate time." They never saw each other again; for, not a great while after that, the man who was having such a "first-rate time" died a lingering death, a bankrupt under indictment for a crime. He could not sacrifice the present for the future.

One day some years ago I was sitting in my office when a man came in. He was poorly dressed; his trousers were fringed and his hat, once black, was faded. Under his arm he carried a cylindrical package done up in an old newspaper. At first I did not know him, but as I looked more closely I saw standing before me my old college chum, the only son of wealthy parents. He had in the package a quart bottle of ink, which he had bought for fifty cents, and he was going from office to office trying to sell it for seventy-five! What had made this boy a tramp on the streets of New York?

Inability in youth to sacrifice the present for the future. I recalled how in college he had paid little attention to lessons; he was bent on enjoying himself, everything had to give way to his pleasure. He lacked the moral courage which would enable him to sacrifice the present for the future.

May I add one more word about courage? It is moral courage which enables a boy to live up to his resolution to have no pleasure that is bought at another's pain. A boy asks himself, "Shall I bet?" The boy with moral courage can answer, "No, if I get any pleasure out of it someone else must get pain." Or he is tempted to an evil association with a young woman. Again he can say, "No, I can't do that; my pleasure will be her eternal sorrow." To brains then, add courage of the right kind—moral courage to guide you in the use of your brains.

Again I hear you say, "Brains and courage are found in some pretty poor specimens," and you think of some brave, learned men who have disgraced humanity. Yes, it is clear that these are not enough. Something else must go along with brains and courage. It is what the poor Tin Woodman was seeking—*heart*. We understand very well what anyone means when he says of a young man, "His heart is not in it," and we wouldn't give much for his work unless it is. We are not surprised, therefore, when we find the Bible making so much of the heart: "Keep thy *heart* with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." "Create in me a clean *heart*." "Blessed are the pure in *heart*." "As a man thinketh in his *heart*, so is he."

That was a great thing those black men did when their great master, Livingstone, died in the wilds of Africa. As they were preparing his body to carry it to the sea coast to send it back to England, they first removed his heart and buried it in the soil of Africa, because, they said, his heart had been given for Africa. And so it had; he had given his life, and his heart was his life.

To brains and courage we must, therefore, add heart. Put



your heart into your work, or as we sometimes say, do it heartily, and never do anything into which you cannot put your heart. For your heart is yourself. And as you are thinking of what work you would like to do, choose a vocation in life into which you can put your heart, and don't choose one not worthy of that great gift.

Brains, courage, heart—does not every boy need all these?

But to come back to our friends on the yellow path, whom we have almost forgotten, I fear. They finally reached the end of the path, and found the home of the Wonderful Wizard of Oz. The poor Scarecrow in fear and trembling explained to him the sad condition of his head, because of its lack of brains. The good Wizard made up a mixture of meal and bran, threw in a few pins and needles and tacks to add sharpness, and taking the straw out of the bag that formed the head of the Scarecrow, he filled it with this mixture, sewed it on, and away the Scarecrow ran, greatly rejoiced at the change.

The Lion told of the indignities he had suffered from the other animals, because he had lost his courage. Going to a cupboard the Wizard took out a bottle labeled "Courage." This he gave the Lion to drink and as soon as he drank it, he began to roar and prance around as brave as ever. Back he went to the jungle to show the other animals what a real lion was.

The poor Tin Woodman, with tears streaming down his tinny face, told the Wizard about the young lady whom he wished to love, and how troubled he was because he had no heart with which to love her. Going over to a bureau the Wizard took up a red flannel pincushion in the shape of a heart. This he hung inside the Tin Woodman's empty chest, and immediately, after thanking the Wizard, the Woodman ran off to find the young lady, and I presume they lived happily together ever after.

Dorothy, of course, told how she wished she could get back to Kansas. The Wizard sent her in one of his balloons,

and ultimately Aunt Em was surprised to see her walking into a new house that had been built. They got brains, courage, and heart. Can young men get them?

Dorothy and her friends found a helpful Wizard and they found him by following the yellow path which led to his house. Is there a yellow path along which boys and young men may go? Is there a Wizard for them? There is. The path is a golden path, for it is the Bible, and those who go that way find the wonder-worker, of whom the Bible speaks, even Jesus Christ. He it is who is able to do wonderful things for any young man. When He was here upon the earth He gathered about Him a company of men who were not learned but men with very ordinary brains. But association with Him gave them brains, so that the books some of them wrote are read more than any other books in the world today. More than once He met some poor fellow whose brains were all twisted and He straightened them out.

These men whom He drew about Him were cowardly, for in the time of His extreme need, when He was in great danger, every single one of them ran away. But He gathered them together again and filled them with such courage that nothing could ever frighten them. And today He is so filling men with courage that in China they will boldly confess Him, though that confession means death.

And heart? Yes, these disciples of His abandoned all for His dear sake; they gave themselves: He had changed their hearts from the poor things they had been to responsive, loving hearts, beating in unison with His own great heart. And the only place where heart is found today is where this same wonder-worker is known and loved.

Yes, this same Christ is living today; He is the same wonder-worker now that He was then; and He has said, "Ask and it shall be given you"; "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Come to Him and be changed. Let Him give you brains, courage, and heart, and then you will live a life that is worth while.



## V

### WHY A BOY IS LIKE A WATCH

A LITTLE while ago I visited a classmate of mine who is president of the company which makes the Ingersoll watches. He asked me if I would like to go through the factory and see what they were doing. Of course I was glad to accept his invitation and went through the great buildings with him. In one room he showed me 50,000 watches being regulated and told me that at that time they were turning out 14,000 watches a day. I never saw so many watches in all my life.

The next day I spoke to a company of boys at a school, and as I looked into their faces, I began to think how much a boy is like a watch. For instance, some watches are worth more than others, and this is true of boys. The reason why some watches are worth more than others is that one is made of good material and the other of poor; one has works which have been carefully made, the other not. So with boys, the material of which they are made and the workmanship of the material very largely determine their value. Boys who through exercise, good habits, proper eating, and sufficient sleep have good bodies are worth more in every way than boys who have neglected and abused their bodies by indulging in habits, like smoking and impurity, which render their bodies less efficient. So the boy who is careful to train his mind by education is like the watch which is well made, while the boy who neglects his mental training is like the watch which is poorly made. I went to school with a boy who seemed to think that school was a sort of joke. He never studied if he could help it and he did everything that he could to make the schoolroom a place of entertainment for himself and a place of disturbance for others. I often see this same

boy now, after the lapse of forty years, standing round the street corners unemployed, useless to everybody as well as to himself. He is like the watch that is poorly made.

Another way in which a boy is like a watch is that the noisiest watch is not by any means the best watch. A Jurgensen watch, costing \$500, makes far less noise than an Ingersoll watch which costs only \$2.50; and there is no comparison between the two. So the boy who is always boasting of his exploits and making a great noise about what he has done is less reliable than the modest little fellow who does things and keeps quiet about it.

Anybody who carries a watch knows how careful we have to be of it. A friend of mine had a watch which suddenly stopped running. He took it to a jeweler, who looked at it but could not determine what was the matter with it. He asked my friend to leave it with him, and to call in a few days. He did so and when he went back the jeweler said, "Mr. Smith, have you been anywhere near electricity?" My friend replied, "Yes, a few days ago a friend of mine took me through his power plant." "That's it," said the jeweler, "the steel in your watch has been magnetized, because you have been near a great magnet, and the watch will be useless until we get the magnetism out."

In the same way boys ought to be careful to keep away from things which prevent them from running true. Boys who go into temptation are like the watch that has been too near a magnet. Seeing certain kinds of pictures and hearing some kinds of stories will do for the boy's heart what the magnet did for the watch, and, therefore, just as we try to keep our watches going by taking care of them so boys who want to ring true should keep away from places of temptation.

Not long ago I visited the Metropolitan Museum and saw there a collection of watches belonging to Mr. J. P. Morgan. In the collection there was one watch which attracted my attention more than any other because of its beauty. It was

a hunting case watch and the outside was entirely covered with jewels—diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. It was by far the most beautiful watch in the large collection; but the works were rusted, the hands were broken, and it was plain that it never could tell time in its present condition. It was beautiful, but useless; for the important part of a watch is not the outside but the inside. An Ingersoll watch costing \$2.50 would be more useful as a watch than this beautiful one which perhaps cost \$10,000. Here again a boy is like a watch; because what is inside a boy is of more importance than what he has on the outside. I remember a boy who was in college with me, whose father died, leaving him about \$100,000. He was always dressed in the height of fashion, with spotless linen, polished shoes, and expensive cravats, and anyone seeing him walking down Chapel Street would have thought that he was a fine specimen of the college boy; but anyone who really knew him at all knew that inwardly he was rotten. He did everything that was wrong that a boy could do; his thoughts and his speech were vile. I was not surprised, therefore, some fifteen or twenty years later, when, one wet morning, a man looking like a tramp walked into my office, dressed in ragged clothes, with an unkempt beard, wanting to borrow fifty cents, to discover that it was the boy whom I had known in college and who outwardly appeared so beautiful but who inwardly was so unclean. He was like the watch that was beautiful on the outside. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," and as the good watch is the watch with the good works, no matter whether the outside be brass or gold or copper, so the good boy is the boy whose inward parts are pure and clean.

One morning I walked down to the depot, expecting to catch the 8:30 train as usual. My watch said it was 8:25. I found very few people there, and when after waiting five minutes I asked the station agent where the 8:30 was and he said it had gone, I was surprised. When I got to New York I took my watch to a jeweler and asked him what was

wrong with it. He opened the back, put that little spyglass on his eye, smiled, and said, "Why, Mr. Murray, I don't wonder." "What's wrong?" I asked. "Dirt," he replied. And that was why my watch went wrong and I missed my train: dirt had gotten into it. Here again a boy is like a watch—something gets into his heart and makes him go wrong. We call it sin. It is like dirt in a watch, and the only thing to do is for him to go, as I went with my watch, to someone who knows about the trouble. I took my watch to a watchmaker, not to a blacksmith or a butcher or a doctor; so a boy with sin in his heart must go to the One who knows about hearts and how to cleanse them. He must go with the prayer of the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

One time I asked a class of men that I was teaching to write an essay on the subject which we are discussing, why a boy is like a watch. They suggested a great many similitudes which I cannot stop to speak about, but some of which I will give you. A boy is like a watch because:

He gives good time to other people.

He keeps good time for a while and then becomes irregular.

He suffers if put in the hands of a bad mechanic.

He grows dearer as he grows older.

He is sometimes ahead and sometimes behind.

He is an intricate and complex mechanism.

Regular winding, like regular habits, tends to make the watch keep good time.

Some are open-faced and some closed.

A watch needs adjustment, so does a boy.

Both have jewels in them.

We cannot get along without them.

Each has a mainspring—a force which moves.

When he gets a little older, there is generally a girl in the case.

But I must refer to two or three more: A watch in order to be useful has to be wound up, and so does a boy. An un-

wound watch is useless. A boy gets his winding through education in moral and spiritual things. An uneducated man is like an unwound watch, of no use for the purpose for which it was intended.

• A watch may be a very good watch, but if it tells the wrong time it makes a great deal of trouble; and so a boy who does not tell the right time—does not ring true—makes trouble for himself and others. Wrecks have been caused both on land and sea, because the watch on the train or the chronometer on the ship has been out a few seconds; and the wrecks have injured not only those who were responsible for the incorrect time, but those who were depending upon them. A boy with whom I used to go to school recently died in state prison because he had chosen all his life not to tell the right time; not only did this make a felon of him, but he had brought his mother to her grave and wrecked his father's life. Wrongdoing can be forgiven, but the injury once done to others cannot be undone.

Lastly, the boy is like a watch in this respect: The watch did not make itself; the brass and steel and jewels that are in it did not say to each other, "We will get together and form a watch," but someone with a mind took the brass, the steel, and the jewels, shaped them into the proper forms, put them in their proper places, and brought forth a watch. So it seems to me no one can look at a boy without being sure that some higher being, with a mind, brought together the love and affection and reasoning powers and the personality which go to make up a boy. In the very beginning God said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness," and it was He who made the boy.

## VI

### ANGER

DURING the World War I am sure a good many of us thought often of what Jesus said one day, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and of those other Bible words, "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry." If people do forget and are angry then the happy man, the blessed man, is the one who makes peace between them. There is a story in the Bible about two men who became angry and a beautiful woman who was the peacemaker. One man who got angry was David, a man whom God loved very much and for whom God had done a great deal. Nevertheless he got angry, lost his temper, as we say. This is how it happened: Nabal, a rich shepherd, lived with his wife, Abigail, in Carmel. Nabal was cross and ugly. His servants didn't like him, but Abigail, on the other hand, was "of a beautiful countenance."

In the country where Nabal lived there were a good many robbers and wild beasts, so that Nabal had to have men to watch his sheep while they were in the fields. Near by David and his men were hiding from King Saul, and oftentimes David's men would help these shepherds care for their sheep and beat off the robbers. And now the sheep had been gathered together in one place to be sheared—to have the heavy wool cut off so that it could be used to make cloth.

As David and his men needed food, he sent ten of them to ask Nabal to give them something to eat. Although these men were very polite, Nabal was angry at them and at David and wouldn't give them anything. He answered the messengers very harshly, and said he couldn't do anything for them. When they got back to David and told him what Nabal had said, David was mad, as mad as he could be. He



called his men together and had them put on their swords and he started out to find Nabal to kill him and his wife and all his family. You see how angry he was! Now, one of Nabal's servants had seen how he treated David's messengers and he was worried. He went to Abigail and told her how kind David and his men had been to them and how angry Nabal was and how crossly he had spoken. Abigail knew that David would get angry, too, so she made up her mind that she would have to try to make peace between the two angry men.

The Bible tells us about the present she prepared for David—two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, five sheep ready to be cooked, a lot of corn and raisins and figs. All of this stuff she put on a horse's back and sent her servant with it ahead of her when she started to see David. Pretty soon she met him coming along with his armed men. David looked angry and cruel, so that Abigail got off her horse and knelt down before him and asked that she might speak to him. Then she told him how she hadn't seen his messengers when they came to the house; only her husband had seen them. "Blame me," she said. "Don't blame my husband. Your men didn't come to me. I didn't know anything about it. Take this present which I have brought." And then she gave David the bread and the sheep and the figs and all the other good things she had brought him.

David was greatly pleased, especially because Abigail had kept him from committing a great sin when he was angry. You know how people do bad things when they are angry. He thanked Abigail and told her it would be all right; she could go home in peace. Both of them must have felt happy at the peace that was made.

But Abigail made one mistake. When she went out to meet David to make peace between him and Nabal she didn't tell her husband what she was going to do. I think it would have been better if she had, for when she got back from her visit to David and told her husband about it, although it had

been successful and had saved Nabal from David's anger, it seems to have made him so angry that he died.

What a terrible thing it is to get angry! "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry." "Blessed are the peacemakers."



## VII

### FAITH

WHAT is this? A dollar, you say. Well, we call it a dollar, but it is really only a piece of paper with some printing on it. I don't suppose the paper itself is worth more than a cent, but we know very well that we can take it to the store and spend it for a hundred cents' worth of anything we want to buy. How does it happen that this little piece of paper, itself worth less than a cent, is really worth a hundred cents? I'll tell you. It is because there is printed on this bit of paper these words, "This certifies that there has been deposited in the Treasury of the United States one silver dollar payable to the bearer on demand." This means that in Washington, in that big building they call the Treasury Building, there is a silver dollar which I can get, any time I take this piece of paper and ask for it.

You ask me, how do I know it's there and that I can get it? Well, I believe what it says on this paper; I trust the United States; I have faith in my country. That is what we call trust or faith, the same sort of faith the Bible speaks about.

A little boy was put to bed by his mother; then she turned out the light and said to him, "Now, Charlie, I'll sit in the next room while you go to sleep." Do you suppose he was afraid? Not at all. He had faith in his mother, and snuggled down in bed and went trustfully to sleep. One time a father went down into a dark cellar to fix something that had broken. On the floor above was his little daughter. As she looked down into the cellar, through the opening down which her father had gone, she could see nothing—it was black darkness. She called to her father and he answered her. Then she said, "I want to come down there." Her father said, "All right," and he came and stood under the opening.

In the dark of the cellar she couldn't see him, but he could see her up there in the light. And when he said, "Now jump, Father is here and will catch you," she was afraid at first, for though she could hear his voice she could not see him—there was just a black hole. But he said again, "It's all right; Father is right here; jump and I will catch you." Then she just jumped without seeing, and of course her father caught her. She trusted her father; she had faith that he would do what he said.

The Bible tells us the most wonderful stories about people who had faith in God. You remember what Daniel and his friends said when they were told they would be put in the furnace of fire, if they worshiped any god but the King: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us." Job, that good man, had all sorts of trouble and even his wife tried to shake his faith, but he said something like this: "No, I trust my God. Even if He should see fit to kill me I would still trust Him." And so we could read the stories of Elisha, David, Moses, Noah, and all the others who trusted God—had faith in God.

I suppose it is hard sometimes to have faith when we can't see. But that is what faith is—trusting when we can't see.

An old doctor was called one stormy night to see a patient who was greatly frightened because of an attack he had had. He knew that sometime one of these attacks would be the end. He had no faith in God and so he said to the old doctor, "You are a member of the Church. I have no religious belief. Tell me, for the love of God, what is there beyond?" The old doctor answered, "I don't know." And then his patient asked, "Are you not afraid of what may be beyond?" "No," said the good doctor, "may I ask you to look here?" He opened the door and there lay his dog. "This is my dog. He has followed me through the storm and has been lying outside the door, knowing that I was in the room. He never was here before. He did not know what was in this room. He did not care to know. He knew I was in it, his master,

whom he loves, and who has cared for him. He was not afraid. And I am not afraid. I know that my Master who loves me is in the place to which I am going and that is enough."

## VIII

# TEMPTATION

PAUL wrote to his friends in Corinth, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." He knew what a wicked city Corinth was and how surely the Christians there would be tempted to sin, and so he wrote these encouraging words to them, "Yes, you will be tempted; but God has made a way out for you." Everybody is tempted; and it is no sin to be tempted. The sin is in yielding to temptation. I think it was Luther who said, "I can't prevent the birds from flying over my head, but I can prevent them from building nests in my hair." We can't prevent temptation's coming; we can, by God's grace, "endure it." We can escape from it. One of the ways of escape I am sure is found in the example of Jesus.

At the very beginning of His life work, just after He had been baptized and His heavenly Father had called Him his beloved Son and had said He was well pleased with Him, Jesus was sorely tempted.

He was hungry and the Tempter came to Him and said, "Make bread out of these stones and satisfy your hunger." To understand how great a temptation this was we must remember what Jesus was trying to do. He wasn't living for Himself, but He was trying to get people to acknowledge God as their Father and accept Him as king. He was trying to establish God's Kingdom on the earth. Satan was saying to Jesus in this first temptation: "You want to establish God's Kingdom on the earth; let the people see that you can feed

them by making bread out of stones and they will make you king quickly enough: that's the kind of a king they want." And you know that's exactly what they tried to do a year or so later. You remember how after He had fed the five thousand people with the bread and fish the little boy gave Him, they wanted Him to be their king. But Jesus said, "No, I can't do it that way. God's Kingdom can't be established merely by satisfying physical wants, by giving people material things. It must come by God's word."

The same temptation comes to every boy and girl—the temptation to be content with satisfying physical wants. It isn't hunger nowadays, but it's the cry of the physical nature. It may be to some form of impurity, or to intemperance in drink. But it's the same old temptation which Jesus endured. Or it may be in the form of a temptation to seek satisfaction in material things, rather than in spiritual. It often is seen when a boy or girl seeks popularity or social honors, and uses wrong methods to attain good ends. Let our answer be, "No, not that way, but God's way."

After a while the Tempter came back with another proposition: "You want to succeed in what you are trying to do. I'll show you how you can do it. Jump down unhurt from the top of the Temple into the crowd of people in the court below and create a sensation; be spectacular, and they'll crowd into your Kingdom." But again Jesus said, "No; I must take the slow way of winning men one by one."

This, too, is our temptation, boys and girls—the temptation to be superficial, to study for marks rather than to master a subject, to take the easy courses so as to get through, to play the game merely to win instead of for the game's own sake. It's the temptation of the gambler who wants to get something for nothing; the temptation to put quantity before quality. Let us, like Jesus, refuse to be deceived by this temptation.

Then came the most subtle of all the temptations that Jesus endured that day. Here on one side was the Devil, the prince

of this world, and on the other Jesus, anxious to establish His Kingdom. The Tempter showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and said: "Enter into a partnership with me; fall down and worship me and I will give these kingdoms to you." They certainly were his; anyone who knows anything about Roman history knows that when Jesus was beginning His work the kingdoms of the world belonged to Satan. And now Jesus was longing for those kingdoms and Satan said, "I'll give them to you; they are mine; just form an alliance with me and they are yours." It was a temptation to an unholy alliance, a temptation to choose the wrong partner. And Jesus wouldn't yield to it.

How that temptation comes to boys and girls today! It's a temptation to compromise, to let down a little, watching to get into a crowd that can help rather than a crowd where one can be helpful. Or it's a temptation to choose companions whose influence is not for the best things, just because such companions have some of the things we want. Let us boldly and bravely say to the Tempter, as Jesus said, "I've had enough of you; I will go God's way."

And I do not think we can ever do better when tempted than to follow the example of Jesus when He was tempted. Each time He saw the danger because He knew what the Bible said about it; He realized that Satan was a liar, and that the Bible was true. So we need to study our Bibles if we are going to escape in times of temptation. This is one of the ways of escape God has provided. The Psalmist said, no doubt thinking of temptation, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." That is exactly what Jesus had done. Back in Nazareth His mother had taught Him those wonderful verses which He used with the Devil there on the mountain.

Jesus refused the help of earth and got the help of heaven, for in the story we read, "The devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him." The messenger of the underworld left and the messengers of the upper world

came. And so it will be always. God won't leave us alone: He will send His angels to help us. "God is faithful."

Jesus was tempted, no doubt, at other times, for at the very end of His life He could look back and say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." He had successfully overcome every temptation: He was without sin. May it be our joy to say this, too.



## IX

### SELFISHNESS

A LITTLE girl once told me that when her class was dismissed in school all the children would begin to call out to the maid who helped them, "Put my rubbers on first; put my coat on first." And I have seen children at table who always wanted to be helped first. Did you ever see any like that? And I've seen boys in Sunday school, who, as soon as the school was over, would crowd and push and try to get out first. Do you know what such children are called?

There are just two kinds of people in the world—those who are like sponges and those who are like candles. A sponge, you know, soaks up everything and draws it into itself and keeps it; a candle throws out light and slowly uses itself up.

Things that we just get and keep are not much good. What use would wheat be if we stored it away in barns and never used it? Of course, it's good to be careful of our money, but if we merely put it away and kept it as a miser does, never using it, what good would it do us or anybody else? Then there's love. I may have lots of love, but if it's only for myself it's a pretty poor kind of love. No, we must use what we have and we must use it for others.

How many times we see boys or girls in a family who ask for things just for themselves! Haven't you done that? We do it without thinking of the other boys and girls in the family. That is the way it was with James and John, two of Jesus' disciples. I am sure He liked to have His friends ask Him for what they wanted—He told them to ask; but I am just as sure that He did not like these two men when they asked Him one day for something. They came to Him and said, "Lord, when you get to heaven and we get there



won't you give us the best places?" Jesus turned to them and said, "You don't know what you are talking about." I think it was because they were so selfish—they wanted the best for themselves and Jesus didn't like men who were selfish.

One time an old man and a young man came to a place where they had to separate. Both kept sheep and where they lived there wasn't room for both. So they went out to a hill where they could look over the land and the older man, Abraham, said to Lot, the younger man, "I'll let you choose first." That was unselfish, wasn't it? You would have thought the younger man would have said, "No, that wouldn't be right: you are older than I, you choose first." But he didn't say anything of the kind. He looked out over the land and he saw a place that looked fertile and well watered, and that seemed to be the best land, and he just said, "I'll take that over there," and he took it.

Jesus said He wanted to be unselfish: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." That was the kind of life He wanted to live. He was eager to help other people, not anxious to be helped by them.

There is a story that in a certain country there was a dipper covered with diamonds, which would bring a great blessing to anyone who found it. Whenever a baby was born, as soon as it could understand they told him about the diamond dipper.

One day a little child was told the story by his mother, who gave him a tin dipper so that he would know what a dipper looked like as he went about hunting for the diamond dipper. He got very tired and thirsty searching for the beautiful dipper, but he could find no water. So he closed his eyes and prayed that his dipper might be filled, and when he looked—there it was full of water.

As he walked along he spied a poor flower nearly dead for lack of water; so he poured some on it, and when he started to take a drink himself he was surprised to find that there

was as much water in the dipper as ever, and the dipper itself had turned to silver.

While he was looking at it a poor dog came panting along, with his tongue hanging out with thirst. The boy took a little of the water in his hand and gave him a drink and suddenly the dipper changed to gold.

Then he thought, "Now surely I can take a drink myself." But just then a poor man came along and begged a drink. The boy lifted up the dipper and let him drink all he wanted, and as he gave it to him he thought he heard someone say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me," and the man was gone. He had forgotten his own thirst in the joy of helping others and when at last he lifted the dipper to take his own drink, lo and behold, it was covered with diamonds

## X

### OBEDIENCE

ONE Sunday morning I stood before a company of 1,500 men all dressed alike, who had marched into church in squads of fifty, each with a leader. They were in prison. As I looked at them I couldn't help thinking that each one of them had once been a bright-faced boy, running around as free as the air, and here they were shut in by stone walls, going where others told them to go and not free to go where they pleased. What had made the change? I can tell you in one word—disobedience. They had broken the laws of the state and were being punished by the state.

Once when I was a little boy my father took me to a city where there were great buildings and beautiful grounds. There were men and women in the buildings and walking along the paths, but none of them were allowed to go outside the great iron fence which surrounded the place. These people were insane; they were not allowed to do as they pleased; they had to do what others told them to do. And again it was disobedience. Either they or their parents or grandparents had disobeyed nature's laws and they were being punished for their disobedience.

For nearly forty years a huge company of people led by that great man, Moses, had wandered around in a desert. They were trying to go from Egypt to the Promised Land, a journey they could have made in forty days, and here they were spending forty years on the way. What was the matter? Again it was disobedience, and God had to say to them that He was tired of them and that they should be "wanderers in the wilderness for forty years." All who were over twenty years of age should die and only "the little ones"

should get into the Promised Land. Disobedience killed a whole nation.

But one of the saddest stories of disobedience, I think, is found almost at the beginning of the Bible. Two people—a man and his wife—are standing just outside a beautiful garden in which they used to live. God had prepared this garden for them. In it He had put everything they needed for food and for comfort. He had given it to them, but He had said to them, “All this is yours. You can do as you like with it; but there is just one tree whose fruit you are not to eat.” And do you know, those two people with everything anybody could long for weren’t satisfied, but disobeyed and ate of the fruit of that forbidden tree.

And they were driven out of their beautiful home, being punished for their disobedience. It’s a sad story, but it’s an old, old story—disobedience brings punishment.

But we must remember, too, that obedience brings blessing. Abram was living with his father in a place called Ur. One day God came to him and told him He wanted him to leave his home and go to another country. It isn’t hard to think of what Abram might have said, for we know what boys and girls say when they are asked to do something they don’t quite understand. He might have said, “It’s all right here,” or “It’s a long journey and I’m afraid,” or “I don’t know the way,” or made a lot of other excuses. But he didn’t say anything of the kind—he just packed up and started. Always after that God spoke of Abraham, as he was called, as His friend, because he obeyed. And Jesus said the same about us: “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you,” that is, “if you obey me.”

One of the wisest men that ever lived wrote these words in the Bible: “Children, obey your parents in all things.” He knew how important it was to obey; he knew how disobedience brought punishment and how obedience brought blessing. And I think he put in those words “all things” because he knew we would be tempted to think that it didn’t

matter when it was some very little thing we were thinking about. You know the story of the little fish. His mother had tried to tell him what a hook looked like and how dangerous it was. But one day he saw a hook dangling in the water, with a nice worm on it, and he said to himself, "I'll bite at it just this once; once won't make any difference." But it did; it made all the difference in the world to that little fish. You never can tell—it may be just that one disobedience that will spoil everything.

One day a father asked his son to drive a stake in a certain place in the yard to hold up the grapevine. He refused to do it, and when his father insisted the boy struck him in the face and then ran away from home. Naturally he did not become a better boy away from home, and one day he stole something and was arrested. He was sent to prison for sixteen years. He was ashamed to write to his father; but when he got out of prison he wrote a letter, to which he got no answer. Then he became a wanderer. One day he came back to the village. His father was dead. He went to the cemetery and looked at the grave where he was buried. The next day some of the village people found a stake driven in the ground beside the father's grave, on which was written, "Father, I will obey you." How much sorrow his disobedience had brought him!

## XI

### LOYALTY

WHEN my boy was about ten years old I took him to see a Yale-Princeton football game. He had always been destined for Yale. We brought along a young friend of his who lived near by, who had no special college affiliations. We were watching the players surge back and forth, when, seeing a good play by the Princeton team, our little friend jumped up and began to join heartily in the cheering. My boy was on his feet in an instant, looking as angry as a ten-year-old could. Glaring at the other boy he burst out, "You Dago! What did we bring you for?"

That is what we call loyalty, at least one form of it. It was the same sort of loyalty that brought the tears to the eyes of a great big German on a street in London just after the war was declared, when he found he could not get back to fight for his country. It was loyalty that made Livingstone, sick as he was, turn round and go back into the forest instead of sailing for home. He had promised his black servants that if they went to the coast with him he would see them safely home again.

Some one has defined loyalty as the willing, practical, and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause. One of the finest illustrations of such loyalty is found in the story of Ruth. Elimelech and Naomi had found it hard to get along in Judah, so with their two sons they had left the homeland and had moved to Moab, where they heard that times were better. By and by Elimelech died and the two sons grew up and married Moabites, one of them marrying Orpah and the other Ruth. But after a while both of Naomi's sons died and the three widows were left alone in the world. Naomi had heard that things were more prosperous now in her own

country, and she decided to go back to her old home. She told her two daughters-in-law what she intended to do. They had learned to love Naomi and would like to have stayed with her, but she thought it would be better for them to remain in their own country. Nevertheless, she let them go part way with her. Then when the time came to part they had a good cry together, and kissed each other and hardly knew what to do. Finally Orpah left them and went back to her old home, but Ruth wouldn't go back. She threw her arms around her mother-in-law's neck and said she didn't want to leave her, but wanted to follow her back to her country. "For," she said, "whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Her devotion was willing, thoroughgoing, and practical. And many a man, as he has pledged his loyalty to the woman who becomes his wife, has had a reference to these words engraved on the wedding ring.

First, then, you must have a worthy cause. Some may have one cause, and some another; with Ruth it was her mother-in-law. At one time one cause will make the supreme appeal, at another time some other equally laudable end will seem most important. It may be home or business, school or college, church or Sunday school or Y. M. C. A.; it may be our country, both at peace and at war. But first of all, the loyal man must have a worthy cause. There must be something to which he can be devoted.

The writer who defined loyalty as I have given it above, says that there are many things a loyal man does with his cause to show his loyalty. Let us suppose that the cause to which you wish to show your loyalty is the Church. Then first of all you will hold it before your mind. You will keep saying to yourself, "Will what I do now help or hinder the progress of the Church? If people see me here, doing what I am now doing, will they think more or less of the Church?"



That is, you will always be thinking of the effect of your conduct as one loyal to the Church.

Then again the loyal man treats his cause impartially; he is not biased by personal feeling. He recognizes that his cause is bigger than he is. He will try to get the right ideas of what his cause is, be it school or church or country. If it is his country, he sees that a call to the colors is to be obeyed because the welfare of his country is more important than his personal comfort and safety.

A loyal man tries also thoroughly to understand his cause. If the cause is the Church, he tries to see what the Church is. A recent writer says we are too apt to look upon the Church from an agricultural viewpoint rather than a military one—as a field to be cultivated rather than a base from which a holy war can be carried into the enemy's country.

Of course the loyal man will love his cause passionately and will serve it practically. He will do something to show his loyalty. If his cause is his religion and he is thrown into company with a lot of men or boys, as at a school or a military camp, he will read his Bible and pray night and morning, like the recruit at Fort Ethan Allen who quietly laid his Bible on his trunk in his tent and said to his tent-mates, "That is my Bible. I read it daily. If any of you boys would like to join me, come on—but I shall read it."

Some loyal boys from that great school at Uppingham of which Thring was the head master were off on a vacation. One Sunday some one in the group proposed an excursion which was not just what these boys would have indulged in at home. One of the boys said, "No, we can't do that. Thring wouldn't like it." He put his loyalty into practice.

In war days we admire most not the men who stand cheering on the sidewalk, but the brave young fellows who march down the street on their way to the front. They are the loyal men; they are practically serving the country they love. And so in church or school—the loyal man is not content to talk about it, he does something for it.



## XII

### CONTENTMENT

ONE day a little girl sighed and said, "I wish I could be something else." "What would you like to be?" asked a little voice. "I would like to be a rosebud," the girl replied. Suddenly she felt herself changing and soon she was a rose. How pleasant it was to be a rosebud! By and by a fairy came along and said, "I think I'll eat the rosebud for dinner." "Don't, don't," the little girl called out. "If you do you'll eat my head." This made the fairy laugh and the little girl cried out, "Please make me something else, quick. Make me into a bird."

In a few minutes she was a bird hopping around in the grass. "This is great fun," she exclaimed, "but how hungry I am." "Are you?" said the little voice. "Then I'll feed you," and in front of her stood an ugly little man with a big green worm, which he tried to put in her mouth. She screamed out, "I won't eat that horrid worm! I'm not a real bird! I'm a—I'm a—" Just then she woke up and found she had been dreaming. As soon as she saw her mother she said, "Oh, Mamma, Mamma, I'd much rather be a little girl than anything else."

Yes, one of the most difficult things for children to do is to be contented where they are and satisfied with what they have. I knew a boy who was very fond of bananas. He never was satisfied with the one his mother gave him—he always wanted more. Well, one day he had a chance to eat as many as he wanted to, so he kept on eating them until he had eaten I don't know how many. Anyhow, they were enough to make him sick and for years after that he could hardly look at a banana; he certainly couldn't eat one. I

have read somewhere of a man who was told he could have all the money he could carry away in his pocket. All around him were silver coins. He began to fill his pocket until it bulged out with money. Then, when he had taken what he thought was enough (he would have taken more if he could), he started away with it. But it was so heavy that it tore his pocket loose and before he knew it he had lost it all. Then he said to himself, sadly, "If I had taken less, I should have more." I suppose that's the way the boy felt who ate the bananas—if he had been content with fewer, he would have enjoyed them more.

Paul, that great man who wrote so many books in the Bible, once said that he had learned wherever he was to be contented. And Paul was often in places where you wouldn't expect anybody to be contented. But he knew his heavenly Father was taking care of him and so he was satisfied to leave it with God. Read in his letter to the Corinthians all the uncomfortable things that happened to him (II Cor. 11:23-29). Even after all those hardships he could say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Haven't you seen boys who wanted stamps that other boys had? Or a girl who was not satisfied with her own doll but wanted one like Mary's? Did you ever see school children who wanted vacation all the time? Yes, it is easy to be dissatisfied, discontented with our own things, when we see what other people have.

Mrs. Laura E. Richards tells of a boy on a farm who could look across the valley to another farmhouse on a hill, where there was a house whose windows seemed to be made of gold and diamonds. Then the people seemed to put up the shutters. The boy thought they did this because it was supper time. One day he went over to the house with the golden windows, but when he got there they looked just like other windows. Then he met a little girl who, when he asked her, said that they had no golden

windows. "The golden windows are over there," she said, and she pointed over the valley to his house. And, sure enough, when he looked the golden windows were in his house. He went home a much more contented boy.

## XIII

# CHRISTMAS

As the time draws near Christmas I like each year to take some part of the Christmas story and think about it, turning it over in my mind, so that I really live it over again in my own experience.

This year I've been thinking about two verses in the first chapter of John's gospel. When you first read them you might not think they had much to do with Christmas, but let us see.

John has been telling how Jesus was God and had always lived—how He had lived with His Father before this world was made, how He made the world. He even says, "Without Him was not anything made that was made." Then he tells how at last God came to live in His world—the world He made, the world that was His world. Then John says, and this is the first of the two verses I've been thinking about:

"He came unto his own and his own received him not." Or, as some would read it: "He came unto his own things and his own people received him not."

"He came unto his own things." The world was His, for He made it: He came to that. He came to Judea, the home of His earthly ancestors. They had been looking anxiously for His coming in Judea. They wondered every time a boy baby was born whether He had come, for the old prophets long before had told them that He was coming, and so they were waiting for Him.

I don't suppose we know how much they needed Him; but they knew. Times were hard; people were cruel. Men and women were made to fight with wild animals to amuse whoever wanted to come to the show. Sick people were turned out to die; the insane were chained to posts. And it was

while things were in such condition that He came unto His own.

"And His own people received Him not." To be sure, there was some joy when He was born. The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest." The shepherds ran to tell the good news. The wise men showed their gladness by their gifts. His mother must have rejoiced greatly, for she knew that her boy was to be Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Yes, the first Christmas was a time of gladness. But it didn't last long. There had been no room for Him in the inn. The cruel king soon drove Him out of His country. As He grew up he was misunderstood. When they found Him in the temple His mother asked Him how He could treat His parents so disrespectfully. By and by, in His own village of Nazareth, His neighbors wanted to kill Him; the people made Him leave Judea and then He had to flee from Galilee. His friends said, "He is crazy," and his enemies said, "He is in league with the Devil." He became a man without a country. "The foxes have holes," He said, "and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." And last of all, His own people put Him to death. "He came unto his own and his own received him not."

But I said there were two verses I had been thinking about. We have talked about one of them, now we must talk about the other. This second verse begins, "But as many as received him." So there were some who welcomed Him. Not a great many, to be sure, but some. After He had been here over thirty years, there were only about one hundred and twenty who called themselves His friends.

At first the Apostles received him, His special friends; then there were a few good women and some men like Nicodemus and Joseph. Of course, the little children and sick people were always glad to see Him. They let Him in.

And then the verse goes on, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God." Those who received Him and welcomed Him, those who

were glad He had come, they became His children—not strangers or visitors, but children, entitled because they were children to a place in their Father's home.

And now we are rejoicing because He came. Christmas is a time of joy for us. But is that all that Christmas means to us? Will Christmas be over next week, next month? Are we not going to make it a time of real joy by letting Him come in, so that we may become children of God? He is saying this Christmas Sunday, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man . . . open the door, I will come in."

We have been singing,

"Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown  
When Thou camest to earth for me;  
But in Bethlehem's home  
There was found no room  
For Thy holy nativity.  
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,  
There is room in my heart for Thee."

Do we mean it?

## XIV

### LISTENING TO GOD

ONCE upon a time some lumbermen were cutting timber in the woods in British Columbia. Among the workmen were some Indians. One day the boss wanted a certain kind of ax which he knew was back in the camp where the supplies were kept. So he took a shingle and with a piece of charcoal wrote on it a message, asking for the ax. Then he called an Indian and told him to take that back to the camp and bring back what they gave him. The Indian couldn't read, so when he got to the camp and gave the man the shingle, and then saw the man read it and go and get the ax and give it to him, he was so frightened he ran away into the woods. He couldn't understand how a shingle with a few marks on it could ask for an ax.

So it is we sometimes can't understand how people can talk to each other when they don't see one another. There were no telephones when I was a boy, and if anyone had told me that a man in New York had talked to his wife in Plainfield I'm afraid I would have wanted to run away as the Indian did. But now it doesn't surprise us or frighten us when people who can't see each other talk together.

Once there was a mother named Hannah. She wanted a baby boy very much, so she spoke to God. She couldn't see God, but she was sure He would hear her if she spoke to Him. She told the Lord that if He would give her a baby boy she would lend him to the Lord. Sure enough, a boy was born in her home soon after that, and when he was a very little fellow she took him to the temple and told the priest, Eli, about what she had promised, and Eli took the little boy to help in the church work. There he grew up until he was quite a big boy. One night he was sleeping in



his usual place in the temple when he thought he heard some one calling him. He thought of course it was Eli, the old priest, but Eli said, No, he hadn't called. Then he told Samuel, for that was the little boy's name, to lie down again and if he heard the voice again to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." So by and by Samuel heard the call again, and then he answered just as Eli had told him and said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." And God spoke to him. He was as surprised, I imagine, as the Indian who found that the shingle could speak.

And God speaks to us today just as truly as He spoke to Samuel that night in the temple. How does he speak? Why, first of all, in the Bible. We can read there what He wants to say to us. He speaks to us, too, in springtime, when the trees begin to bud again and the grass grows green and the flowers come out, as if He were saying, "I've taken care of them through the cold winter and now I'm bringing them back to life again."

He speaks to us by the gifts He is making to us all the time. One day I got a package from a friend and in it was a book. It was my birthday and I could hear my friend saying through the gift, though he wasn't anywhere near me, "I'm thinking of you and wishing you joy." So God gives us homes, and parents, and eyes and ears, and all the joy of life, and some of its sorrow, and in His gifts we can hear Him speaking to us. Let us listen for His voice and say as Samuel did, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."



## XV

### PRAYER

ONE day I was sitting on the stone steps at Silver Bay, folding birds and frogs and other things out of paper for the children, and very soon quite a crowd of men and women had gathered about us. It wasn't very long before two or three of the women said, "Won't you teach us to make them?" They had seen me making paper toys and that made them want to learn how to make them themselves. When you see anyone doing something interesting you are very likely to want to be shown how to do it yourself.

It was that way with Jesus' disciples. He used to get up early in the morning to pray. One day some of His disciples heard Him praying. They must have wondered why He, God's Son, needed to pray; but undoubtedly they knew that it helped Him to be the strong man that He was. So they came to Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Seeing Him pray made them want to learn how to pray. He was always anxious to teach people, so He told them He had a prayer He wanted them to learn: "Our Father which art in heaven," and then he went on to teach them the rest of the Lord's Prayer. What He wanted them to learn was that they had a Father in heaven, that God in heaven was their Father; for He knew that if they could understand that they had a heavenly Father it meant that they must talk to Him, for you couldn't think of anybody not talking to his father; and talking to our heavenly Father is praying.

Just try to imagine living in a house with your father and never speaking to him! It is hard even to think it. But when we don't pray it is a good deal like that. I knew two brothers who lived in the same house and never spoke to each other. They were always uncomfortable and unhappy.

Prayer is talking to our heavenly Father. Now, we don't ask for something every time we speak to the father in our home; sometimes we tell him what we've been doing or we thank him for what he has done for us. There are a thousand things we talk with him about. So when we pray, it isn't always to ask for something, it's just to talk with our Father—to tell Him about ourselves, to thank Him for what He has done, to seek His approval.

Many times, though, we do ask our fathers for things we think we want and I'm sure they like to have us ask. What would I think of my boy if he never asked me for anything? But I don't always give my boy what he asks for. I couldn't, I love him too much.

I had one of the best of fathers and I asked him for a great many things. One time I asked him for a gun, and he said he couldn't give it to me because it would be dangerous. I didn't like that answer; I thought I was big enough to have a gun. A little while after that a boy about my age had a gun. He had no father or mother. I don't know where he got it, but he had it. One day he asked me to go hunting with him and some other boys. We went into the woods and pretty soon we saw a rabbit run under a heap of brush. As quick as we could we ran up on top of the pile and began to jump up and down to make the rabbit run out, and while we were jumping the gun went off and shot one of the boys. Fortunately it didn't kill him, but he was in bed for many months and suffered a great deal. Then I began to think that my father knew better than I did about guns, and that he was a good father when he refused to give me one when I asked for it. So it is with our heavenly Father: He is so much wiser than we are that we ought to be satisfied when He says, "No," as well as when He says, "Yes."

We must remember, too, that our heavenly Father has a very large family and He must think of all the boys and girls. Suppose there was a family where there was a father and mother and four or five children, and one boy went to

his father and said, "Father, I want the library to use all by myself." You know what that father would say; he would say, "Why no, Charlie, I can't let you have it. George and Molly want to use it sometimes. I must think of them as well as you." So our heavenly Father has to answer our prayers sometimes. He must think of His other children.

Many times our parents don't give us what we ask for, but they help us to get it. My father might have given me a lot of money so that I wouldn't have to work, but he knew it would be much better for me if I got my own money, so he gave me an education and then I was able to earn money. Our heavenly Father gives us health and strength and brains and tells us to use them to get for ourselves the things He might very easily give us in answer to our prayers.

When those women asked me to teach them how to make paper toys I showed them the toys I had made and then taught them how to make them. It was hard work for some of them, for they couldn't remember the rules which had to be followed, and the toys didn't look like much unless they did follow the rules. So when Jesus taught His disciples to pray He showed them a prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven," and little by little He taught them the rules they should follow when they prayed. "If you want to have your prayers answered," He said, "you must forgive anyone who has injured you. You mustn't be hard-hearted when you go to your Father." That seems perfectly fair, doesn't it? You wouldn't feel much like asking your father for some toy or game if all the time you were angry with your brother.

Then He told them they must be in earnest when they prayed. He said: "You must be like the man who had a friend come to his house suddenly one night. The friend was hungry and they had to go to their next-door neighbor to borrow something for him. But the neighbor had gone to bed and didn't want to get up, although the man who wanted to borrow was his friend. But he did get up and give him what he wanted, because he saw that the man was so

much in earnest." Some people only pray at night when they are all tired out and they just mumble over some words without really thinking about them. I know a girl who said her prayers at night just before she was ready for bed, and then something attracted her attention so that she didn't get into bed as she intended to do. When she was through she knelt down and said the same prayer over again; she had forgotten that she had prayed a few minutes before. Do you think God would be interested in such a prayer?

Let us ask Jesus to teach us to pray.

## XVI

### THE FIRST EASTER

DID you ever try to think of the first Easter service, or rather of the first Easter Day, for there wasn't any service? Let us try on this Easter to see if we can imagine what the first Easter was like.

In the first place, we want to know who were there. Of course the men who traveled with Jesus, His disciples, were there after a while—not all of them, for one had gone away. The good women who, while He was traveling about in Galilee, did what they could to make Him comfortable—they were there. Among them was Joanna, the wife of a man who was an officer in the king's household; Salome, the mother of two of the disciples, James and John; Mary, Jesus' mother, was one of them, and poor Mary Magdalene for whom Jesus had done so much.

Jesus had been crucified on Friday. All His disciples had run away. Mary Magdalene and one of the other Marys saw him buried in Joseph's new tomb, just outside Jerusalem. They had seen how hurriedly and carelessly it had been done, and they had made up their minds that when their Sabbath, our Saturday, was over they would bury him more carefully. So they waited for Sunday to come. In the meantime they got some of the other women and prepared the spices and ointment which they used in those days when anyone was buried.

I suppose Joanna, that woman of the palace, came because life had been sweetened for her after she met Jesus. In the palace all was heathenism and cruelty. If the king wanted to punish a slave by cutting off his head he could do it. But when she had learned to love Jesus and Jesus loved her, life had become different for Joanna. Mary and Salome had come

because their boys had been intimate friends of Jesus and they were greatly interested in their sons' friend. And Mary, His mother, poor broken-hearted Mary, where else would she be? All of these people were Jesus' friends; He had been good to them, and even in death they wanted to be good to Him.

They weren't expecting an Easter Sunday. Some of them had seen the big stone rolled in front of the tomb in which the soldiers had placed Jesus' body and they were going to find that dead body and embalm it. They didn't expect to find an open grave, for they asked each other as they went along the road, "Who will roll away the stone for us, so that we can get at His body?" And even when Mary saw the empty tomb, she never thought it meant that Jesus had come up out of the grave, but she began to cry, because, as she thought, somebody had stolen the precious body. What they all expected to find was a dead man. And His disciples hadn't any doubt about it whatever; they didn't even go to see the grave—what good could that do?

And what did they find, these good women? Not the body of Jesus, but an empty grave and an angel who asked them why they were looking for the living Christ among the dead people. And then they saw Jesus Himself, somewhat different, but the same old friend they had known all along. Off they went to tell the disciples and some of them rushed up to the tomb, and sure enough, it was true—the Lord had risen indeed! The first Easter Sunday was there. How few knew or cared anything about it! Just a few women and a handful of men.

And now another Easter Sunday has come round, as they have been coming round for hundreds and hundreds of years. Who keeps it now? Not a few men and women, but millions of men and women, boys and girls. We are among the number as we celebrate our Easter Sunday today.

What is it that brings us? For many Jesus has sweetened life as He sweetened the life of Joanna; some are here be-



cause their children are with Him as were the children of Mary and Salome. For all of us Jesus has done great things and we are here to show our joy that He rose from the dead.

And what do we expect to find? Flowers? Yes, none are too beautiful for Him. Fine music? Of course, it is a day to rejoice and we sing when we are glad. An impressive service? None is too grand and stately for Him. But if we only expect to find on our Easter Sunday flowers and music and beauty we shall make the mistake those good women made on the first Easter Sunday. We shall be looking for the wrong thing, as they looked for the wrong thing. We must expect to find, as we shall find, a living Christ. He said, "Because I live ye shall live also." May He speak to us today as He spoke to Mary long, long ago.

In our Christian religion two days are greatest, I think, Christmas and Easter: the day Christ was born; the day He rose from the dead. Our religion centers in a person, just as all great religions do. Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism—each had its great person. But they have died; nobody ever pretends that Buddha, Confucius, or Mohammed is alive. Our religion has a person, but one who is not dead—one who is alive still. Our Easter tells us of His life: we worship a living Christ.

"Awake, awake, O sleeping heart,  
Cast off your load of sin,  
Unbolt the gates, unbar the doors,  
And let the Christ come in.  
His love like sunshine stream abroad,  
To cheer and bless our way,  
That we may sing with birds and flowers,  
This happy Easter Day.  
'Tis Easter time, 'tis Easter time,  
And Christ is risen today!"



## XVII

### CHILDREN'S DAY

WHENEVER anybody says "children," we think of fathers and mothers, for we always find them where there are children. And what could be better than to think about our fathers and mothers on Children's Day? How they love us! Once out on the western plains, after a great snowstorm, some shepherds who were out looking for lost sheep stumbled over what looked like a bundle in the snow. But when they brushed the snow away they found it was a woman frozen to death. Nearly all her clothes had been taken off and wrapped into a bundle beside her, and this bundle the shepherds found was her baby, still alive and warm. She had given her life for her child.

I wish we knew more about Jesus when He was a boy living in Nazareth with His father and mother. I feel pretty sure that He learned how to tell those wonderful stories of His by telling stories to His little brothers and sisters. I'm sure He helped His father in the carpenter shop. There is one verse in the Bible that tells us a good deal about Him as a boy, though we don't usually notice it. When Jesus was thirty years old He was baptized, and His heavenly Father, looking down on Him, said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." If a boy goes through life, working in the carpenter shop, playing with his brothers and sisters and then when he is ready to leave home and begin for himself, his father can say, as Jesus' Father said, "He has been a good boy, I'm pleased with what he has done," we may be pretty sure that that boy has indeed been a good boy.

You remember how He got left behind in Jerusalem when he was only twelve years old and when His mother found

Him in the Temple and told Him they had been looking everywhere for Him, He was surprised and said, "Why, Mother, I don't see how you could have thought of looking anywhere else for me." Where would your mother look for you if you were lost?

On this Children's Day as we are thinking of our fathers and mothers let's resolve to love them as we have never loved them before; let us show our love by doing something for them. This is what we so often forget.

A Sunday school teacher told me that he once said to the boys in his class, "Now, boys, how would it be if, before you went to school, you should say, 'Mother, isn't there something I can do for you?' How would she like it?" And one boy answered, "I think she'd send for the doctor." You see, he realized that he never had done such a thing, and it would be a shock to his mother. Mothers like surprises like this.

But Children's Day is a day when mothers and fathers should think of their children, for sometimes a boy or a girl is not all that he or she ought to be because, maybe, Father hasn't been what he ought to be, or Mother has been too busy with other things.

A man was sentenced to prison and he wrote a letter to the judge who sentenced him, in which he said, "I sat pondering last night on the end of my evil ways and came to the conclusion that I had myself to blame. It might have been different had I had a mother's love to guide me."

An old hermit was telling some boys how he happened to be living in the mountains by himself. He had followed the wrong trail, he said, when he was back in the city and he had come out into the woods to see if he could not find the better trail, and he closed by saying, "I have often thought if I had just had a father to help me find the other one I might have been different."

Fathers and mothers, on this Children's Day let us resolve to live so that we can say to our children, "Follow me."

## XVIII

### RALLY DAY

THERE comes a time in the life of an army when an inspection is held. The men stand up and are counted, and their equipment is examined. The officers look them over to see if they are ready for battle. Then sometimes they have a dress parade. They are in their best uniforms, every man is in the ranks, and they march along so that people can see how fine they look and that they are ready.

Rally Day in Sunday school is something like inspection and dress parade in the army. We come together to be counted; to let each other see how many of us there are; to have our equipment inspected; to see if we are ready for the Sunday school work of the year ahead of us.

But dress parade isn't the important event for an army. That's only to show what they have to fight with; it's the battle, the fight, that is the important thing. It's good to have a dress parade—it helps the soldier to be proud of his regiment; it makes him more courageous when he sees how many men there are, and how many will be with him in the fight. So Rally Day is good for Sunday schools, but it is not the most important part of the Sunday school life.

It is said that before each great battle Napoleon would stand by his tent and one by one his generals would pass by and grasp his hand. Nothing was said, but they understood: the commander could count on them. I think our Rally Day could be something like that. It could be a time when we grasp the hand of our great Commander, the Captain of our salvation, and let Him know that He can depend on each one of us. Then it surely will be worth while to have it.

But, as I have said, it is not the rally, useful as that is, that counts, but the things we do after the rally. One time

they called for a rally of the Boy Scouts of England. Thousands of these splendid little fellows came together on a great Rally Day and the King walked about and inspected them. He was greatly impressed by the fine appearance of so many boys, but what attracted his attention especially was a peculiar badge which he saw on a few boys here and there. When he asked what it was he was told that each boy who wore that badge had saved a life. Those were the boys he admired the most—they were not merely at the rally, they had done something.

During our Civil War one of our generals had gathered a great army. He drilled the men and equipped them, and had splendid dress parades, but he didn't fight the enemy with them. They were a fine lot of men; when they were on dress parade, they were a splendid sight, but they weren't fighting. And President Lincoln back in Washington was angry with that general, for he knew that the thing an army was intended for was fighting.

The good St. Francis was asked by one of his brother monks if he would go into the village with him and preach. St. Francis consented and together they walked to the village. They went along one street and down another until they had walked over a good part of the town and were nearly home again. Finally the brother said, "St. Francis, when are we going to preach?" And St. Francis said, "We have already preached." It is what we are that really counts—not getting together on this Rally Day and singing our songs and congratulating each other, but what we are and will be in the weeks and months ahead of us. Mere going to Sunday school avails but little; we must live as those should live who go to Sunday school. That is what counts.

The real Rally Day is to come. I don't know when, but some day, surely. Jesus told about it when He said that all the people in this world would come together for that grand Rally Day. And there would be a parade and an inspection and a Judge; and He would divide the people into two crowds

—those who had done something for Him and those who had done nothing. That will be a Rally Day that counts. And some people, He said, will be surprised. They will say, "Lord, when did we do anything for you?" And the Lord will say, "When you fed those hungry people in Belgium, when you clothed those Armenians, when you helped those men in the prison camps of Europe in the Great War, then you were doing something for me." This Rally Day is to get us ready for that other Rally Day.

Miss Richards in her beautiful book, "The Golden Windows," tells of the children who were set to reap in a wheat field. When evening came the Angel of the wheat field called the children to the gate to bring their sheaves. One child had none and the Angel had to say to him, "None enters here without sheaves." But one of the other children cried out, "Dear Angel, let him in. In the morning I was sick and he played with me and I forgot my pain, and he gave me one of his sheaves." And another said, "Dear Angel, let him in. The hot sun made me faint and he brought me water. He gave me one of his sheaves, too." And still another called to the Angel, "I was tired out and the day was nearly over and I hadn't very many sheaves, when he came along and gave me his sheaves and comforted me." And all the children cried out, "He gave us his sheaves, too; let him in." The Angel reached inside the gate and brought out a pile of sheaves. "Here are your sheaves," said the Angel. "They are known and counted every one." And he said to the child, "Lead the way in."

## XIX

### WHEN JESUS CAME

ONE morning our newspaper told us the story of a man who was exhibiting some trained lions in a theater in New York. There were four or five of them and somehow or other they got out of their cage and began to walk round where the people were. Of course there was a great rush to get away from them, and the people were nearly wild with fear. Very soon a man came out on the stage and talked to the people in such a way about the lions that they quieted down and everybody got out safely.

Doesn't it seem as if the Great War were a time like that when the lions got loose? People were killing each other and the whole world was in confusion. It seemed as if wild beasts had been let loose. How much we need some one who can be to the world what that man was who quieted the frightened crowd.

Just before Jesus was born it was also a time like that. The poor people were tormented and ill-treated by the Romans who were almost like wild animals. One way in which the Romans amused themselves was to let hungry beasts loose in a theater and then make people fight with them. There was great need for some one who could bring peace and quietness into this world.

And they had a promise in their Bible that such a man would come. He was to be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." And they were waiting anxiously for His coming. God was coming to His earth; He had spoken by His prophets, He was to speak now by His Son.

At last the time came when the first stirrings of the great event began to be felt. Up in the temple in Jerusalem one



day the priest Zacharias was told that he should have a baby boy in his home who would grow up and prepare the way for the coming of this Prince of Peace.

A simple Jewish girl in Nazareth was told by an angel that she ought to be a very happy woman, for her baby was to be the long-looked-for Saviour of the world. And then Joseph, Mary's husband, was told about it, too.

Over in the East a wonderful new star had appeared that started some strange-looking men on a search for this Saviour, for they understood that the star would lead to Him.

Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem, their old family home, and there, while the shepherds were out in the field watching their sheep by night, and while a host of angels appeared in the sky and sang "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men," the little child was born who was to be the Saviour of the world. The Prince of Peace had come!

But that was long, long ago. Will He come to our troubled times; will He come now when the world needs Him so much? Yes, He surely will, for He has said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." He will come if we will let Him.

And often He comes when we don't realize that He has come. Tolstoi tells a beautiful story of how He came to an old shoemaker named Martin, who didn't realize that He had come. The old man had been reading in his Bible about the poor woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, and when Simon found fault with her Jesus said, "My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman has anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

He also read, "Then the King shall say . . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye



gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And he wondered what it meant. That night when he fell asleep he thought he heard a voice saying, "Martin, Martin, look for me in the street tomorrow; I'm coming to your home."

And so all day Martin kept looking for Him. One time he called a poor old woman in and gave her and her baby something warm to wear. A little later he called in another poor woman who looked sick and gave her some warm tea; and then he saw the poor old man who used to shovel the snow, looking so cold and forlorn, and he brought him in to have some tea.

The time came when Martin was to close his shop and he sat down to read again the Bible stories that had interested him so much. And as he nodded, falling half asleep, and wondering why Christ for whom he had been watching hadn't come, he seemed to hear a voice, "Martin, I have come." He looked over where the voice came from and the first old woman seemed to step out and fade away. Again he heard, or thought he heard, "Martin, I have come," and there from the corner the other old woman seemed to step forward and then vanish; and a third time he thought the voice said, "Martin, I have come," and the old snow shoveler seemed to step out and then to disappear. Then he remembered what he had read: "I was hungry and ye gave me to eat . . . I was naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye have done it unto me."

Then Martin knew that Christ had come, for where love is, there God is.

## XX

### A BIRTHDAY TALK

THIS is my birthday. I've had a great many of them and I'm very thankful, but at the same time I wish I were back where a lot of them had not yet come. Suppose you count with me to see just how many I've had and when we get to the right number we'll stop. One, two, three, that's right, four, five, six, and so on to fifty-nine. Isn't that a lot?

In our Sunday school we've had a lot of birthdays, too. Whenever our boys and girls have birthdays they put into the birthday bank as many pennies as they are years old, and I write each one a birthday letter. Once a little girl put in her seven pennies and then put in two more. "Why, Eleanor," I said, "what are those for?" "Those are for my dog, Beauty, she's just two years old." So I had to write a birthday letter to Beauty. One other Sunday a boy put in his six pennies and then put in an extra one. I asked him about that one and he said that was for his rooster, who was just a year old, so a letter had to go to the rooster. One day a little girl added a penny to the six for herself and told me it was for her doll. I wrote a birthday letter to the doll. These were curious birthdays, weren't they?

But ever so many years ago there was the greatest of all birthdays. I want to tell you about it. It was so great that every newspaper printed today tells on its very first page how many years and months and days it is since that birthday. Everybody who writes a letter today begins by saying how long it is since that birthday. And here we are now talking about it. What a wonderful birthday that must have been.

The people were expecting a king to be born. They had a king who wasn't good to them; he took their property and

treated them badly, so they were anxious for the coming of the new king. They had a book which told them what a wonderful man the new king would be, and they were eager for his birthday. Every time a boy baby was born in any of their homes they would ask each other, "Can this be the new king?"

Away off in a distant country some wise men had heard about this birthday that was to be, and they understood that when the time came a beautiful star would show them the way to the place where the new king was born. And one day they discovered the star and started out to see the new king.

Over in the fields near Bethlehem shepherds kept watch over their sheep at night, for fear of wild animals. I suppose they often talked together about the birthday they were expecting. Well, one night while they were out in the field with their sheep a bright light suddenly came into the sky which frightened them; but very soon an angel stood near by and said, "Don't be afraid. The birthday you've been looking for has come. Over in Bethlehem you'll find the new King."

A few days before this two people had started from their home to go to Bethlehem, because the king wanted to count the people in his kingdom. They went to the hotel, but there wasn't room for them there, so they had to sleep in the barn that night, the same night that the shepherds saw the angel. There the little King was born. They had no cradle, so they laid Him in the clean straw of the manger, where the cows were fed.

The shepherds didn't wait long after the angel spoke to them, but rushed back to the village to see what had happened and there they found that it was true—the birthday had come! By and by the wise men who were following the star came, too, and found the wonderful baby and gave Him the birthday presents they had brought.

I wonder if you can tell me who it was that was born that day? Yes, it was Jesus.

There's a beautiful story, not in the Bible, which tells us that the hotel keeper in Bethlehem had a little daughter. She had been made lame by the kick of one of the mules in the courtyard. When they told her that there was a baby in the barn she was delighted and ran out as soon as she was dressed to see Him. The minute she saw Him she wanted to do something for Him. But she had very little. Her dearest possession was a little pet lamb, and she looked up into her mother's face and said, "Oh, Mother, couldn't I give Him my lamb?" "Why, yes," her mother said, "if you would like to." And so she gathered the precious lamb into her arms and laid him in the manger by the baby. Then she turned to the baby's mother and said, "Couldn't I hold Him in my arms just a minute?" He was a very wee baby, but Mary, his mother, saw how anxious the little lame girl was and so she picked the baby up and put Him in the little girl's arms for a moment. And then, the story says, a wonderful thing happened. After that the little girl wasn't lame any more. She could run about just like other children and was so happy. Her mother and father didn't know how it had happened, but the little girl knew it was because Jesus had touched her.

And that's why it is such a wonderful birthday—wherever Jesus goes He makes people better and stronger and happier. Because He isn't here on the earth today, some people think we can no longer get close to Him. But we can. He said we could in the Bible. He still lives and we can talk to Him, and through the Bible and through our hearts He talks to us. He wants us to be His friends, His children. One of His great friends, the man he loved best when He was here on the earth, wrote, "As many as received him [Jesus], to them gave he the right to become children of God."

So let us not be content with knowing about His birthday, but let us try to know Him and to let Him come into our lives by doing the things that please Him, then He will be our King, too.

## XXI

### SHOWING OUR LOVE BY DOING

THE last night of Jesus' earthly life had come. He and His disciples had spent Wednesday night with His friends, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, in their home in Bethany, a little village near by, and were now in Jerusalem. Thursday morning they had walked into the city. In those days people wore sandals instead of shoes. These were something like shoes, only they had no top to them, just a sole bound to the foot by strings. You can see how hot and dusty their feet would get. It was the custom, when a visitor came, to have a servant ready with water to wash the tired, hot feet, after the sandals had been laid off, just as we ask a visitor when he comes to our homes if he would like to wash his face and hands. And, too, we must remember that when people gathered about the table for a meal they didn't sit on chairs, but lay on couches with their heads near the table and their feet on the other end of the couch. Jesus and His twelve friends had come to a supper and if you had been in the room you would have seen the men lying there before the table with their bare feet on the outside end of the couches.

On the way to the supper there had been a sort of quarrel among the disciples. They had been talking about which one of them was the greatest. I suppose Peter said, "Well, Jesus often takes me with Him and He doesn't take the rest of you." And Judas might have said, "He couldn't get along very well without me; I'm the treasurer, and keep the money." So no doubt the talk went on. I imagine they got rather angry at one another.

Jesus knew about this quarreling and it made Him very

sad. He had been with these men for three years and He must have thought that they had learned something in that time. So He made up His mind that He would teach them a lesson in loving each other. After they had all lain down at the supper table, He got up and took a basin of water and a towel and actually did for them what a servant usually did for visitors: He washed their feet. I don't wonder Peter said, "Lord, I can't let you wash my feet; that is not for you to do; that is the servant's work." But Jesus went round and washed them one by one. How ashamed they must have felt as they remembered their quarrel about who was the greatest, when they saw Him, who was easily the greatest, doing the work of a servant!

Then He said to them, "Do you know what I've done? I've set you an example. Don't fight to be great, but be like me, a servant to all." A little later He said to them, "This is what I want: I want you to love each other." He knew that if they loved each other there wouldn't be any quarreling about who was greatest. And then, too, He wanted them to help people, just as He had gone up and down the country helping people because He loved them.

We gladly do anything for people if we love them. Once a little girl was carrying a very heavy baby and a kind man came along who felt sorry for her because she had so much to carry. He asked her, "Doesn't it make you tired to carry such a big baby? Isn't he heavy?" She looked up a bit surprised and said, "Why, he isn't heavy, he's my brother." Her love for her little brother made her burden light.

Some boys were playing on a dock in New York and one of them fell into the river. Quick as a flash one of the other boys, only about twelve years old, jumped in after him. Then some policemen came along and pulled both the boys out of the water. One policeman said to the older boy, "Sonny, that was a nervy thing you did, jumping into the river after that little boy. Weren't you afraid you'd be drowned?" "No," said the boy, "I wasn't afraid. Why, you know he's

my brother!" That made him brave; he loved his little brother and he couldn't see him drown.

Yes, we can do things for people we love. In one of our army camps one day a man discovered the Y. M. C. A. Secretary blacking a soldier's boots. He was somewhat surprised and when he asked the secretary why he did it, he said, "I love these men, and I want them to know it. My Lord took the place of a servant and washed His disciples' feet. He said He wanted us to be like Him, so I black the soldiers' boots and I cut their hair—anything to show them how I love them."



## XXII

### SECRET SIN

JOSHUA has led his army successfully and much booty has been captured. In gratitude to God they have given everything to Him as a thank-offering. And now it is time to go to battle again. This time the Israelites do not anticipate much trouble, for the city they are about to attack, Ai, is a little one, with few soldiers, and they are sure it can be captured easily. But they soon find out that they have made a mistake, for though the men of Ai are few in number, Israel's armies cower before them and retreat in a great disaster. Joshua, the general, is dumfounded and cannot understand how his victorious soldiers can be overcome by such a weak force as came out of Ai. In despair he falls on his face before God and cries out, "O Lord, what shall I say when the people of Israel run away from their enemies?" And God answered him, "Get up; why do you cry to me? You've been defeated because Israel has sinned. They have taken some of the things offered to me. I can't help you until you get rid of this sin." It was the old, old story—sorrow brought by sin. It destroyed Eden, it brought the flood, it burned Sodom and Gomorrah, and it is doing the same now.

Then came an investigation and it was discovered that one of the soldiers, Achan by name, had seen some beautiful things among the loot and, thinking nobody would ever know about it, took some of them and hid them in his tent. No one but God had seen him stealing, but God saw and that made all the difference in the world.

Just think how all the people had to suffer because Achan sinned. Many a good soldier, no doubt, lost his life because of Achan's crime. It seems hard, but it is always the way. I get a splinter in my finger and soon my whole hand is un-

comfortable. Or a grain of sand gets into my eye and my whole body suffers. Two or three men get together and commit a crime and the name of the city in which they live becomes a by-word throughout the country. A troop of Boy Scouts were in a competition. Something went wrong and one boy broke out with an oath. This threw the whole troop out of the competition.

Yes, no man liveth unto himself; we are bound to influence others. A man was trying to read in an English railway carriage. The light seemed very dim and he began to find fault with it. When he looked at it a little closer he saw that the light was all right, but the reflector was tarnished and poor. We are the reflectors, not the light, and people blame the light when they should blame the reflector.

And notice again, nobody knew about Achan's sin, but they suffered just the same. Joshua didn't know about it, all that he saw was its results. The secret sin brought suffering to his neighbors. God said to Joshua, "You are suffering because there is an accursed thing in the camp." That was the way He looked at Achan's sin. And what a lot of secret sins there are! Sins that nobody knows anything about—pride, envy, jealousy, impurity, and those insidious sins of the imagination, sins of the thoughts, about which Jesus spoke one day.

And so it comes to this—my sin, unknown to anybody, may prevent God from blessing my home, or my school, or my church, or my group of friends. It is bad enough to suffer myself for my sins, but how awful it is to think that others must suffer, too.

As soon as Joshua realized what the trouble was he began to look for it: if there was sin in the camp he was determined to find it out. He examined his men one by one until he came to Achan, and then the sin was cast out with dreadful punishment. After that they attacked Ai again and were victorious.

If any sin of mine is interfering with God's blessing, may

it be cast out now. May no one ever be denied a blessing because of me.

And the way to cast out the sin is to *repent*—which means to turn away from it, give it up; *confess*—tell God about it and tell the one who has been wronged; and pray for *forgiveness*; then the blessing will come.

I once heard a railroad conductor lead a great men's meeting in prayer. He came out on the platform and knelt down and said, "O Lord, there are lots of little fellows in our homes, and if you were to ask them who is the greatest man on earth, every last one would say 'Papa.' Grant, Lord, that none of these little fellows shall be disappointed today." Is there any sin in your heart, known only to God, that is preventing a blessing coming to those who are dear to you?

## XXIII

### BY THE WAY

As we read the familiar story of the Good Samaritan we do not always realize that this good man was an ordinary business man on a business trip. It is said that he did this good turn "as he journeyed." That is, he wasn't out looking for some kind deed that he could do, but he just accidentally came upon it and did it. And of all the things he had done in his lifetime this is the one of all others for which he is remembered. He may have made a lot of money—I rather think such a man would—or he may have built up a big business, but we do not remember him for any of these things—we remember him because he was ready to help when the chance came to him.

In this he was very much like Jesus, who did many of His kindest deeds "as he journeyed." Jesus had no home. He was continually moving about, and sometimes His journeys were journeys of flight. Once on His way to a banquet He stopped to cure a man of the dropsy; on the way to Nain He met a widow who was going to bury her son, and He stopped to restore him to life; He had promised to go to the home of a prominent man to see his sick son, and was on the way when a poor woman claimed His attention; once when He was taking a short vacation it was broken into by a great crowd that needed and that received His help. He has been called the man who was willing to be interrupted.

And so some of the best things we shall do will be done as we journey—that is, while we are doing one thing the opportunity to do others will meet us.

We mustn't think that the only time we can be helpful is when we start out on purpose to do some kind deed. It is good, of course, to have special times when we try to make

some one happy, but we ought to do a great many "good turns" as we journey, as we go along doing other things.

I don't suppose the good Samaritan ever thought that you and I would be talking about that kind deed he did so many hundreds of years ago; probably he never thought about it himself. He was in the habit of helping people whenever he got a chance and this occurrence on the Jericho road was just one of many good deeds. He was like those people Jesus told about, who were surprised when He told them that they had been kind to Him. They didn't remember any such times, but He said, "Why, it was when you helped those poor people, when you fed them and took care of them, when they were sick." They had forgotten all about it; probably they did it "as they journeyed."

## XXIV

### A GARDEN TALK

I THINK it is interesting to remember that the world began in a garden. When a loving heavenly Father wanted to provide a home for the first of His earthly children, He made a beautiful garden and put them in it. He thought that a garden would be the best place in all the world for them to live in. A long time after that, when He sent His Son to live in our world, He directed Him to a home in the country where He could see the grass and the trees and the flowers and all the growing things. Jesus was always talking about what He had seen in the country. He knew about the mustard seed, how small it was; He saw how the corn grew, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; He knew how the weeds killed the vegetables, and He saw how beautiful the lilies were.

One day He told a lot of people a story about a garden. He said a man took some seed and scattered it over his garden. It was the same seed everywhere, but some fell on the hard path where people walked across the field, and of course it couldn't grow; in fact, the birds saw it lying there and carried it away. Some of it fell where the soil was very thin and there was rock underneath. It did the best it could, but its roots couldn't go very deep. The sun soon dried it up. Over in one corner were a lot of thorny bushes; some seed got among them, but the bushes used all the nourishment in the soil and the seeds didn't get a chance to grow. But there was a part of the seed that got into the right kind of soil—it grew.

Then Jesus said, people are like these different parts of that man's garden. Some are like the hard, beaten path. What the Bible says, is the seed; they hear it but don't do

anything after they hear; they soon forget. Some are like the thin soil. They hear; they start to do something, but they soon give up. They get tired, we say. Other children are like that part of the garden where the thorny bushes thrive. They hear, they start to do something, but they find so many other things to do that they, too, give up. Then there are a few like the ground that was good. They hear, they start, they keep on, they finish. May we every one of us be like the good ground in which the seed grew.

And as the seeds begin to grow and the leaves are put forth, and by and by the flowers blossom out, can we help wondering who does it all? Here are some seeds. I put a few in here, just a little farther along I plant some others, and at this end some different ones. They all grow in the same ground. When the flowers come, some are white; next there are blue ones, and here will be red ones. How did it happen? Who painted them? Not I. No gardener could do it. It couldn't "just happen." Surely it must have been God. No one else could do it.

And then isn't it wonderful how such beautiful flowers sometimes come out of such dirty places! Here is a calla lily. How white and wonderful it is! But it wasn't so bright and clean and pretty when it began. It was just a brown, dirty lump. Then it pushed a stalk up through the earth that isn't at all beautiful. It seems to have on an overcoat. But the sunshine gets at it, and the more the sun shines the more the overcoat is unbuttoned; and the more it is unbuttoned, the more beautiful the lily becomes. It seems at first as if the plant were just thinking of itself and saying, "What a cold world this is; I must just take care of myself." But it realizes before long that the sunshine will keep it warm, so it lets itself go; it opens its heart, and when it is turned completely inside out see how beautiful it is! We grow beautiful when we get out of ourselves.

Once there was a poor woman who lived in a miserable room with just one window. She was not only poor, but she



thought there was no use in doing anything—no use trying to keep her place clean, nobody cared for her. So she let the window get dirty and the cobwebs gather on the walls and the corners collect all kinds of dust. But one Easter Sunday the children in Sunday school took flowers to the poor people in this neighborhood. It so happened that one of the plants, an Easter lily, was brought to this old woman's home. She was greatly surprised to find that some one did care for her. So she thanked the children as they put the plant on the table. Now the window had been unwashed so long that very little light came through the dirt, and she could scarcely see her gift. So she said to herself, "I must clean my window and let in more light. I want to see my flower." She cleaned it, and the sunshine came flooding in and she wondered at the beautiful lily. But when the light came in, it showed her the cobwebs and the dust, too.

"Why," she said, "I didn't know this room was so dirty; I must clean it up." So with broom and duster she set to work and soon it was a very different looking place. In fact, it got to be so clean that she felt that she must take better care of her clothes, so that they would be more like the window and the rest of the room. But best of all it made her think of the anger and jealousy and spite and envy in her own heart and she said, "Now that my room is clean my heart must be clean, too." All of this the Easter lily did. Don't you think flowers are wonderful? Isn't a garden wonderful, too!

## XXV

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

LONG, long ago the people used to worship God by killing a lamb and burning it on an altar. They felt that as the blood flowed out the life of the animal was being given to God, and that thus they showed God their love for Him. For life they knew was the most precious thing in the world, and in offering the life of the lamb they were offering to God the very best thing they had.

Now it happened in those early days that God's people had been for a long, long time in Egypt where the king had treated them very badly. Finally God said He would take them out of Egypt, but He wanted the king to send them out. The king, however, didn't want to let them go, so God had to punish him. He would promise to let the people go and then, when they got all ready to start, he always changed his mind, and wouldn't let them go. Then God had to send an awful punishment to him. He told His own people one day that the angel of death would go through Egypt on a certain night and that he would kill the oldest child in every home except in the houses where he saw the blood of a lamb sprinkled on the door. I suppose there were some people who thought, "Well, what difference can it make whether there is blood on our door or not?" I'm quite sure the Egyptians felt that way. But, anyhow, the Hebrews who believed in God, and who were accustomed to worship Him by killing a lamb, did what God told them to do and sprinkled the blood on the door before they went to bed that night.

And it came true as God said it would. The angel came in the hush of night and the next morning in all the houses where there was no blood on the door there was great sorrow, for the oldest child had died. But in all the houses

where there was blood on the door there was great rejoicing, for the angel of death had passed over. So they called that time the Passover, and every year even now they keep that day, just as we in America keep the Fourth of July. The people were saved by the blood of the lamb.

When Jesus was a boy they observed this feast of the Passover as they called it. As they kept it at Jerusalem, all the good Jews went up to that city to join in the celebration. We read of Jesus going to that celebration when He was twelve years old, and He doubtless went up many more times. He liked to remember how His people had been saved long, long ago by the blood of the lamb that was killed.

And now the last night of His life had come. He and His disciples had come up to Jerusalem once more to keep the feast of the Passover. They were all together in a room in one of the houses, sitting, or rather lying, at the table. One of the things they did as they kept this feast was to kill a lamb and eat it, to help them remember that the blood of a lamb saved their people in those days long ago. While they were at the table, Jesus told them that He was going to be their lamb. He didn't use those exact words, but He tried to help them understand that it wouldn't be necessary any longer to kill a lamb and eat it. He was going to give His life once for all to save the people who believed in Him, just as the people had been saved who believed in God when He told them they would be safe if they put the blood of a lamb on the door of their houses.

He explained it by taking a piece of bread and breaking it. He gave the pieces to His disciples and said, "This broken bread will represent my body to be broken on the cross for you." And then He took the wine and gave it to them and said, "This wine will represent my blood which I am going to shed on the cross for you. I want you to do this in remembrance of me. Eat bread and drink wine to show that you remember that I gave my life for you, that my body was broken and my blood shed for you." The next day Jesus was

crucified; His body was broken and His blood was shed on the cross. Ever since then we have had in our churches a simple meal, which we call the Lord's Supper, when we come together and eat the bread which the minister breaks and drink the wine to show that we remember that Jesus gave His life for us.

## XXVI

### GIVING UP

How hard it is to give up! When my brothers and I were young men living at home, one of my brothers was engaged to a young lady who lived a long way from our house. He used to go to the barn after supper, hitch up the horse, and drive out to the girl's home. I remember one very cold winter night when he went out to the barn as usual to get the horse, but found the door locked. He came back into the house and asked where the key was and was told the hired man had taken it home with him. Then Mother told him that it was such a cold night she was afraid he would freeze if he went to call, so she had the man lock up early and go home. Well, you should have seen that young man—so angry and determined! But he couldn't get the barn open, so he did what he thought was the next best thing—he fretted and fumed a while and then went off to bed. He had made up his mind that he was going to make that call, and he found it hard to give up.

I heard of a girl who wanted a new coat. She had seen a coat which another girl had and she wanted one like it. But her mother and father didn't have much money to spend on clothes, so she had to wear a coat which had become too small for her next oldest sister. I am glad you didn't see her or hear her when her mother told her she would have to wear her sister's coat. My, but it was hard for her to give up!

How many times I've heard girls and boys say, "If I can't do my way, I won't play." None of us likes to give up.

David, the king, didn't act that way. He tried to follow the Bible verse which tells us to serve God with a perfect mind. He was very rich and had built himself a beautiful

palace in Jerusalem. But no church had been built; the people still worshiped in the tent they used when they were traveling in the wilderness. When David looked at his own comfortable home and then at the poor house used for God's worship, he felt very bad. He thought it wasn't right for him to live in such a fine place while the God who had been so good to him had such a poor place. He made up his mind that he would build a church.

He spoke to Nathan, a wise man who lived with him, and told him what he was going to do. But that very night God spoke to Nathan and said, "Go and tell David that he can't build the church." In the morning Nathan went to David and said, "King David, God has asked me to tell you that you mustn't build him a house." Do you suppose David began to sulk and say, "But I *want* to build the church; I know it's right for me to build it. I am rich and see no reason why I shouldn't build it. I don't see why God won't let me do what I want to do"? Nothing of the kind. He called the people together and told them about it, and then he made a wonderful prayer to God, actually thanking Him for His great kindness to him. David didn't find it hard to give up, because he was certain that God knew best.

And Jesus was like that. He once prayed asking His Father in heaven to let Him do His own way, but He put these words in His prayer, "Nevertheless not what I want to do, but what you want me to do." And then He gave up His own way, because He was sure of what His Father wanted Him to do.

It is hard to give up, but let us try to find out what is best, even if it isn't what we think we want, and then with a perfect heart and a willing mind do it.

## XXVII

### OUR GUIDE

ONCE I was in New York City and I wanted to go in an automobile to my home in New Jersey. But I didn't know the way. What do you think I should have done? Ask somebody to tell me the way, you say. Yes, that would help some. Follow the railroad track? That would be rather difficult because I should have to keep on the road and the road doesn't always run alongside the railroad.

Well, I will tell you what I did. I found a chauffeur who knew the way and let him guide the car, and I reached home safely. There was another way I could have done. Can any of you guess? Read the signboards? Yes, that would have helped a lot, and I think I could have found the way.

One time there were a great many people who were traveling. They were going from one place to another, but they didn't know the way. God had promised to guide them, for they were His people. They were surrounded by enemies; they were in a wild country where there were no roads and they didn't know what to do. They needed a guide very much. Just as I got a chauffeur who knew the way, so God gave them a man to guide them. His name was Moses. To get him ready for this journey, God had had him live for forty years in this desert, through which the people had to go, so that when the time came he would know the way.

Then to help Moses God put up signboards. They weren't exactly like our signboards, but they served the same purpose. After the people had pitched the tent in which they were going to worship while they were on the journey, God put a great white cloud over it. And when it was time for them to stop, the cloud stopped. You would suppose that it would be hard to see the cloud at night. So it would, and



God knew it would. A wonderful thing happened: at night the side of the cloud that was toward the travelers glowed with a great fire, and of course they could see it. So whether they moved in the daytime or by night, they had their leader who knew the way and the fiery cloud above them.

Those people ought to have been very thankful to have such help. But they weren't. One time they wanted to go back into Egypt where they had suffered so much, another time they would have been willing to kill Moses, their leader; they were grumbling and growling most of the time. But Moses was patient and the cloud kept guiding them, so that they did finally reach the end of their journey.

Do you know we are a good deal like those people in the wilderness? We know so little. We are going along day by day and year by year, but we don't know what is ahead of us any more than the Israelites did. And God knows that we need a guide, so He has given us one. Sometimes we call it conscience, something inside of us that tells us where to go and what to do. A four-year-old boy saw a little spotted turtle sunning himself. He lifted up a stick to strike the turtle, as he had seen other boys kill squirrels. Years later, when he was telling about it, he said, "Something checked my little arm, and a voice within me said, clear and loud, 'It is wrong!'" He was greatly surprised and ran home to his mother and asked her what it was that told him it was wrong. "She wiped a tear from her eye with her apron," he says, "and taking me in her arms said, 'Some men call it conscience, but I prefer to call it the voice of God. If you listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade out little by little and leave you all in the dark and without a guide. Your life depends upon heeding this little voice.'"

Will you listen for this guiding voice and obey?

## XXVIII

### SEEKING HELP

WHAT a difference it makes where we go for help or whom we ask to help us! If you girls should ask me to help you knit a sweater, could I do it? My wife could, if you asked her, but not I. Or if you boys were getting up a baseball team and should ask me to show you how to throw a curved ball, could I do it? Christy Mathewson could, but not I. It makes all the difference in the world whom we ask to help us.

One time Jesus had had a long, hard day. He had been busy helping people on the shore, as they had crowded around Him. He had been preaching and arguing with the people, and as evening approached He said to His friends, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." He was tired out and wanted to get away from the crowd and rest.

Soon after the boat got started He fell asleep. By and by a storm came up and the little lake was so rough that the disciples, though they had fished there many times, were frightened. At first they let Jesus sleep on: they remembered how tired He was, and they did all they could to row to shore.

But, in spite of their efforts the waves were too much for them and they thought they were going to be drowned. Finally they went to the stern of the boat where Jesus was sleeping. Rather roughly, I imagine, they woke Him and cried out, "Don't you care if we are drowned?" Jesus woke, stood up, looked at the wild billows and said quietly, "Peace, be still." It was as if He were talking to an angry child. No wonder the disciples were astonished, for as soon as He spoke the sea became calm. They looked at Him in wonder and one of them said, "What manner of man is this, that even

the wind and the waves obey Him?" They had gone to the right person for help. Jesus can do anything.

There was once a king who thought he could do anything. His courtiers told him he could. They said, "Why, if you should tell the waves of the sea to come just so far and no farther, they would stop where you told them to stop." The foolish old king, who was also very conceited, thought that this was so. He had his throne brought down to the edge of the ocean and then he called out to the sea, "You must not come any farther than this." But the tide came in and the waves lapped at his feet; they touched the throne and began to wash against it, and as the king saw that what he said made no difference, he had to acknowledge that only God could control the sea, and he went back to his palace a wiser man. If the disciples had gone to such a man for help their ship would have been battered to pieces.

How much we need help in all sorts of things! Here's my watch; it has stopped running; do I take it to a blacksmith or a carpenter? No, I take it to a jeweler. Here's a trolley car that isn't running. What's the matter? Some one looks up and sees that the arm is not against the wire where the electricity is. No wonder it doesn't run. It can't move itself. Well, we are not unlike that—we can't help ourselves. Let us go to the right one for help.

## XXIX

### FAITHFULNESS

ONCE upon a time, in the narrow space between two buildings in a city, there grew a tree. On one side was a blank wall and on the other a poor tenement house, but the tree put forth its fresh leaves even amid these dingy surroundings. One day an old rat who lived near by said to the tree, "Why do you take so much trouble? I wouldn't." The tree only answered, "It's my business. It's the thing I have to do. All my family do it." But a sick girl in the tenement house called her mother and said, "Mother, see, it is spring. The tree is putting out its pretty green leaves. I shall grow better now." And the mother's heart leaped for joy.

Then came the hot summer and the tree shook its clean, cool leaves in the wind. Again the old rat spoke up: "It is a pity for you to do as you do. If you did something useful I'd think better of you. Why do you take all this trouble?" "It's the thing I have to do. All my family do it," answered the tree. And again the sick girl looked at the tree and said to her mother, "I couldn't stand this heat if it were not for the shade of this dear tree. When the wind rustles the leaves, it seems so much cooler." And the old, faithful tree just stood there doing its duty. We want people who, like the tree, will be faithful, doing always what it is their duty to do.

You remember Joseph—how faithful he was through all those long years, getting ready, when the time came, to help his family.

One of the most faithful persons I know of was that little girl, Miriam, Moses's sister. You remember how the wicked king had said that all boy babies must be killed. When Moses was born you know what they did with him—hid him so that the soldiers of the wicked king wouldn't find him. Near

the river where he was hidden in a basket boat his little sister Miriam stood to watch over him. It would have been so easy for her to have said she was afraid, but she didn't; she just stood there where she could hear him if he cried. And so when the princess came along and found the baby, Miriam was there, ready to suggest that she could find a nurse for him. And you know how she ran off and brought back the baby's own mother to be his nurse. Moses was saved because his little sister was faithful.

### XXX

## THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

FOR many years I have been talking to the children in Sunday school about what God has told us to do and what not to do. I've told them about praying and reading the Bible and giving to the poor; about helping others and being unselfish; about keeping Sunday and going to church; and a lot of other things. There is one Commandment about which I thought I would never talk to my child friends—that is, the one which says, "Thou shalt not steal."

The children I know in Sunday school have always been such honest children and have such good fathers and mothers that I thought it would be wasting time to tell them that God said, "Thou shalt not steal." Because none of them ever thought of stealing, anyhow. But one Sunday, after Sunday school, a lady came to me and said, "Mr. Murray, I laid my purse down on this chair, and now it's gone. I think that little girl over there has it, for I saw her have one that looks just like mine." Of course I asked the little girl and she said the purse she had was hers. But I didn't feel satisfied, so I asked her mother about it and her mother said that her little girl had come home from Sunday school with a purse, which she said some one had given to her; the purse she brought home was not her purse. And by and by we found that it was the lady's purse. The little girl had stolen it. I do not need to tell you how sad her mother felt and how she cried when she found that her little girl was a thief. So I said to myself, "When a lesson about stealing comes round I will tell the children that God has said, 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

Today we have that lesson. Elisha was a friend of God. He could do wonderful things. One day a man called Naa-

man, who was very sick and who had been everywhere trying to get well, came to Elisha and he cured him. Of course he was very grateful, and wanted to give Elisha money, and a present besides. But Elisha hadn't cured him for money, so he said he couldn't take anything for what he had done. But one of Elisha's servants happened to be standing near by, and when he saw the silver and the beautiful clothes that Naaman wanted to give to Elisha, he thought it was too bad to let such valuable things get away. Although he had heard Elisha say that he couldn't receive anything for the cure, this servant, Gehazi, ran after Naaman, who had started for home. When he caught up with him he said, "Two poor young men have come to visit my master, and he wants to know if you will please give them some of the things you were going to give him." He had to tell a lie, you see. Naaman thought he was telling the truth, so he gave him the things he had offered to Elisha. He carried the money and the clothes home, and then he did what every thief has to do—he hid them. He was afraid to let anyone see them. But Elisha found that he had been away and asked him where he had been. Gehazi said he hadn't been anywhere, and then Elisha said, "Oh, Gehazi, I know where you've been and I know what you've done. I saw you running after Naaman. You will be sick in Naaman's place." And Gehazi had to live the rest of his miserable life with the nasty disease which Naaman had had. That was the way God punished him for being a thief.

And God can see us even when no one else can. One time a man went to steal corn in a neighbor's field. He took his little boy along to hold the bag while he pulled the ears of corn. When they reached the field the father looked all around to see if anyone was looking, and then he gave the boy the bag to hold. "Father," the boy said, "there is one direction you haven't looked." The father was frightened and thought his son saw some one, but the boy said, "You haven't looked up. There is some one in that direction who



I am sure can see us." That is the direction in which we ought to look.

The trouble with Gehazi—as with everyone who takes what doesn't belong to him—was that his heart was not right. Evil thoughts begin in the heart and then the hands do the stealing. Our hearts must be made right if we want our hands to do right.

One time an old colored man had a clock that stopped running. He couldn't see that anything was wrong with it, but he knew the hands had stopped going round. So he took them off and carried them to the jeweler and told him how the hands wouldn't go round the clock any more, and asked him to fix them. The jeweler laughed at him, of course, for it wasn't the hands that needed fixing, it was the inside of the clock.

That's the way with us. The Bible says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence."

## XXXI

### EASTER

OF all the glad days in the year it seems to me that Easter Sunday is the gladdest. All Sundays are glad days, but Easter Sunday I think is the gladdest. For a long time the grass has been dead, the trees have stretched out their bare branches, the cold winds have whistled through them, and we've kept huddled together to keep warm. But when Easter comes, things are waking up. The grass is beginning to look green; leaves are coming on the branches again; the air is balmy; here and there a flower has appeared; and we throw off some of our heavy clothes. Yes, things are waking from their long winter sleep, and we all rejoice in the new life that seems to come upon the earth at Easter time.

Everybody knows the story of the little girl who thought she had found an old dead onion in the cellar, but her mother told her it was the bulb of an Easter lily; it wasn't dead, only asleep. So she planted the bulb and said, "Good-night, it will soon be morning, then you'll be glad I planted you." Then the sun shone on the earth, the rain watered it, and the little bulb began to get warm, until one day out popped its green head—the lily bulb was awake. And it grew up in the sunshine and spread out its leaves and at last it had on the top of it a beautiful white lily. Then the little girl exclaimed, "Mother, can this be the old dry bulb that I thought was dead?" And her mother said, "Yes, it was not dead, but sleeping." On Easter Sunday they carried the lily to church, where it heard the people singing, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore," and the lily thought they were singing about it. But soon the people sang again, "For Christ is risen, the angels say, at happy

Easter time." Then the lily knew why everybody was so happy: not only had the flowers and leaves and grass come to life, but it was the celebration of the day when Christ who had been dead and buried came to life, and He had said to His followers, "Because I live ye shall live also."

It's a beautiful story, the Easter story, though some parts of it are very sad. Jesus and His disciples had gone to a garden where He often went when He wanted to be away from the crowd. His enemies had been trying to catch Him, and now a man who seemed to be one of His best friends had gone to these enemies and told them where they could find Jesus. "How shall we know which is He?" they asked, and Judas—that was the wicked man's name—said, "I'll go up to Him and kiss Him; that will show you the right man."

Judas did his part and the Roman soldiers arrested Jesus. They had a sort of trial, in which they said they found Him guilty, and He was led away to a hill outside the city and there between two thieves He was crucified. That was Friday. These enemies of His were terribly afraid that in some way He might get out of the rock tomb into which they put His body, so besides rolling a big stone over the opening they sealed it, and put soldiers in front of it to watch it. Saturday was their Sunday, on which no work could be done, so Jesus' friends just kept quiet that day. But as soon as Sunday came, even before the sun was up, the good women who had seen how carelessly the cruel soldiers had buried their beloved Friend rushed to the grave with sweet spices to embalm His precious body. They wondered how they would get into the grave, for they had seen that big stone put over the door and they knew they couldn't roll it away themselves. You can imagine their surprise when they got there and saw that the stone already had been rolled away! When they looked in where the soldiers had put the body of Jesus they saw only an angel and the angel said, "You shouldn't look for the living among the dead. Jesus isn't here. He has risen as He said He would." It was Easter Sunday, the

very first Easter Sunday the world ever saw. Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

Does it seem strange that one should rise from the dead? Listen to this: There was a great scientist named Faraday. On a shelf in his laboratory stood a silver cup. One day it fell from the shelf into a tub containing acid. The acid ate into the silver and dissolved it, so that the cup had disappeared. When Faraday realized what had happened he put some chemical into the acid, which caused the silver to come together in the bottom of the tub so that it could be taken out of the acid. Then Faraday gave the lump of metal to a silversmith, who soon molded it into a cup again. If a man could do this, could not God bring to life one who had died?

As soon as the women heard the angel and saw the empty tomb they ran rejoicing to find the disciples, those men who had been Jesus' particular friends, for the angel had said to them, "Go quickly and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead." And as they ran Jesus Himself met them and He said to them also, "Go, tell my brethren." At last they found these men and told them, but the disciples wouldn't believe them; they couldn't see how anyone who was dead could come to life again. Still Peter and John wanted to find out for themselves, so they started to run to the garden where Jesus had been buried. John was younger than Peter and got there first. He was rather timid, so he just stood outside and looked into the empty grave. In a minute or two Peter came running up; he didn't stop at all: he rushed right into the sepulcher, and when John saw what Peter had done he went in, too. Yes, it was true. The grave was empty. Jesus had risen from the dead. No wonder they rejoiced and no wonder Easter Sunday is such a glad day for us, for we believe that as Jesus came out of the grave alive, so we who believe on Him shall live forevermore.

## XXXII

### THANKSGIVING

THERE was once a little boy named Jack, who said, "What in the world have I to be thankful for?" Of course he said it without thinking. I suppose something had happened that made him cross, and he spoke right out, "What in the world have I to be thankful for?"

Just then the Thanksgiving Angel stood before him. First she touched his eyes and then Jack couldn't see; then she touched his feet and he couldn't move. This made Jack fairly scream, he was so frightened. And the angel said, "Why, Jack, how many things you had to be thankful for. Oh, there's one more thing," and then she touched his lips and he couldn't speak.

"Well, Jack," the angel said to him, "you can still hear—you can be thankful for that. Don't forget how many things you have to be thankful for."

When the angel went away Jack soon found that he could see and walk and speak as he had before, and you may be sure he was a thankful boy and never again asked this question. Did you ever try to think of all the things you have to be thankful for?

One trouble with us children is that while we know how much we have to be thankful for, we forget to show how thankful we are. One day Jesus met ten sick men and told them to go to a certain place and they would be cured. They did go and were cured, but only one of them came back to thank Jesus. It was to this one that Jesus said, sorrowfully, "Didn't I cure ten men? Where are the other nine?"

Did you ever see people sit down to dinner with a table loaded with good things which a heavenly Father had given them, through the rain and the sunshine and rich earth, and

never show in any way that they were thankful for these gifts?

I think this is one reason why every year we have a Thanksgiving Day, so that we can be reminded of all the things we have to be thankful for and can take time to give thanks for them.

I have read of a little girl who called it "Thank you Day." I like that name for it. She rushed out to the barn and said to the cow, "You good old cow, I had some milk for breakfast and I know you gave it to me and I've come to thank you for it. Mother told me this was Thank you Day!" And so she went from one to the other. To the old horse she said, "Thank you for all the good rides you've given me." To the sheep she said, "Thank you for the warm clothes you gave me." And she said "Thank you" to the chickens for the good eggs they had given her.

There's a beautiful story in the Bible of some people who didn't forget to be thankful. They were God's people, and they had been badly treated for long years in Egypt. At last, however, God showed them a way out. In the night they all rose up and started for the promised land. By and by they came to a strip of water and they wondered how they could get across. But again God helped them and made a pathway for them through the Red Sea, so that every one of them got across safely. When their enemies tried to follow them the water rushed back and drowned them. As soon as they were on dry land they sat down and sang a Thanksgiving song:

"Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

### XXXIII

## HEAVEN

ONE time I was in Yokohama, Japan, half way round the world from New York. I had to see about my steamship tickets, so I went to the company's office and, after arranging about them, I fell into conversation with the clerk. "Where do you live?" I asked him. "Where do I live?" he said, "I live in New York. I am just staying here until I can earn enough money to get started in business when I go back." He was in Yokohama, thousands of miles away, but his home was in New York.

When I was a boy I went to college in New Haven and for the best part of four years I stayed in New Haven, but that wasn't my home. I was there while I was being educated, that was all; and when I had been graduated it didn't take me long to get home. For the child's home is where his father and mother, and maybe some brothers and sisters, live.

One day Jesus talked with His friends about His home. He was staying in Jerusalem, but that wasn't His home, any more than Yokohama was that clerk's home, or New Haven was mine. And He called it "My Father's house." That was His home—the place where His Father lived. And as He talked with His friends He said, "I'm going to that home to get it ready for you; I want you to be with me there." Sometimes, you know, it seems as if this earth were home and we were meant to stay here. But Jesus wants us to know that there is a real home waiting for us, where we shall go after our education is finished; He wants us to know that He loves us so much that He has gone on ahead to get it ready for us.

One time there was a gardener who had a greenhouse in



which a great many plants were growing, and they were very happy all together, though sometimes it seemed rather hot and close shut in under the glass. One day the old gardener came into the greenhouse and after he had looked round carefully he took up one plant and carried it outdoors. The poor flower felt so bad it would have cried if it could. It thought to itself, "Now I am going to leave this nice house and all my friends. It's too bad. I wish I could stay here." But the gardener took it outdoors, broke away the pot that crowded it so, and planted it in the earth he had prepared for it. And, oh, the plant did feel so good. It could stretch its roots out, the breeze was cool and lovely, the rain was refreshing, and night and morning it heard the birds sing as it had never heard them in the greenhouse. It wasn't long before the happy plant said, "Well, I know now that the gardener knew best." And if the plants back in the greenhouse could have seen the happy plant they would have thought so, too.

But while Jesus is getting our real home ready for us, He doesn't want to do it all alone; He wants us to get ready, too. He will do His part, but He wants us to do ours.

They tell a story about a woman who went to heaven. She had been very selfish when she lived on this earth—she wanted everything for herself, and it was only when there was anything left over that others might have some. As she looked around at the mansions she saw a little one, and the angel told her that that was for her. "Why," she said, "I can't live in that; I'm used to a big, beautiful house; that won't do for me." "Well," the angel said, "I can't help it. We build your mansion here out of what you send up to us and you haven't sent very much." By and by they came to a very beautiful mansion. "Whose is that?" she asked. "That," said the angel, "is for your washerwoman. She sent up lots of things to build with." "Oh, yes," the woman said, "I remember; she would give away everything she had." What are you sending up to Heaven to build your mansion

with? Jesus is preparing the home for you; are you helping?

I wonder if you have heard the story of the little lame boy, who was a prince and didn't know it and who lived in a hut in the forest with an old man. The old man told him one day that he was the son of a king and that a beautiful home was being prepared for him. This made the boy very happy. So when his back hurt him he thought of the palace, for the old man had told him that there was no pain there. And at night when it was dark the boy was afraid sometimes; but the man told him that in the land where his palace was there was no night, and that made him happy again. And isn't it true that we are children of a King and that a happy home is being prepared for us? How happy we should be! that home, of course, is Heaven.

## XXXIV

### GIFTS

DID you ever hear the story of the Christmas Angel? He carried a pair of scales so big that he could weigh anything that was brought to him. The curious thing about his scales was that he could tell by weighing a present how much happiness it would bring with it. This he did by putting the gift in one side of the scales and a beautiful gem in the other side; if the gift weighed more than the gem it would bring joy.

The story goes on to tell how a rich man brought a piano he was going to give his daughter. When it was rolled into the pan it bounced up into the air, as if it had been made of feathers. The angel told the man his gift wouldn't bring any happiness, because he was giving it in pride and intended to boast about it.

A young woman put into the pan a book which she was going to give to her father. It went up and the jewel went down. The angel told her the trouble was that she was giving the book, not because she loved her father, but because she wanted to read it herself. And so the gifts were weighed one after another, without much indication of happiness. At last a little girl brought a spectacle-wiper she had made for her grandmother. She had saved her pennies and had bought the chamois skin and had embroidered it herself. This time the jewel flew into the air and the spectacle-wiper sank down. Do you know why?

Wouldn't it be curious if some such angel could weigh our birthday presents! Here's a little girl who is going to Margaret's birthday party. She remembers that when she had her birthday Margaret brought her a pretty book, and so she gets her mother to buy her a book to take to Margaret,

but she only does it because Margaret had given her a book. Would the jewel or the book go up in the scales?

Or maybe it's a boy who is going to a friend's party and he says, "I suppose I must take him something, everybody else does." What would happen to his gift?

I wonder how the scales would work with a gift we read about in the Bible. Jesus was sitting in the temple near the box where people dropped in their money, watching the men and women as they came up. Here comes a rich old fellow who fumbles around in his pocket, and at last takes out a few copper coins and throws them in; another one comes along and drops a lot of money into the box. Finally a poor woman comes up the steps. You can see by her clothes that she hasn't much money. She takes out a worn little bag, opens it very carefully and brings out two very small coins worth hardly as much as a cent. Jesus hadn't said a word while the others were giving their money, but as soon as He saw what the poor woman had done He called His disciples, the men whom He was teaching, and said, "Did you see that poor woman and all those rich people? Some of them put a lot of money in the box, but that poor woman has just put in more than all of them. She put in all she had." It is not how much we give, but how we give it.

And Jesus still watches our gifts. I don't suppose the poor woman knew that He was watching; she certainly didn't give because she expected Him to see what she did and then praise her for it. But Jesus saw what she did, and what the others did, too, even if she and they didn't know it. So it is now. He sees and knows why we give. He is like the gift scales.

In the mint where they coin the metals, gold or silver or copper, into dollars and quarters and pennies, there is a machine which reaches a long arm over a tray down which the coins come sliding one by one. As each one comes along, the arm, which is part of the weighing machine, pushes the full weight coins to one side and the short weight ones to the

other, and in this way it separates the good ones from the bad. Jesus does this with our gifts.

Some gifts are like the gift of the poor widow—they please Jesus. I'm sure a gift I read about must have pleased Him greatly. They were making an offering in church for missions. The preacher had been telling the people about the wonderful things the missionaries had been able to do with the people in the heathen land where he had gone to live, and he urged them not only to give money but to give themselves. When the usher came to one pew there was a little boy there. When the plate was passed to him he said, "Put it down lower." The usher thought the little boy couldn't reach it to put in his money, so he held it a little lower; but the boy said, "Put it lower." Then the usher held it almost down to the floor and the boy just got in himself. I think the gift scales would almost topple over with a gift like that.

"The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

## A MISSIONARY TALK

WHAT a strange thing it would be if a father cared for only a part of his children! Suppose there were two boys and two girls in the family and the father should say, "Oh, I don't care for those boys; I'll only feed and clothe the girls." What a queer father he would be!

But that is exactly what some people now think about their heavenly Father: that He cares only for His children who happen to live in the United States, and not for those who live in China. What a curious heavenly Father He would be if this were true!

A certain man named William Carey who lived in England was so sure that his heavenly Father cared for all His children, not only those in England but those in far-away India, that he wanted to go to India and tell the people about his heavenly Father who was also their heavenly Father; he wanted to tell them that God did care for them. But a lot of good people, whom Carey asked to help him, said, "Don't you bother with those people away off in India."

Long ago in Bible times God tried to teach people that He was the Father of all His children and that He cared for all of them, no matter who they were and where they lived. There were then two kinds of people in Palestine—part were called Jews and all other people were called Gentiles. The Jews thought they were the only ones God cared for; they thought that their heavenly Father didn't care at all for the other people on the earth. I'll tell you how God showed these Jews that He did care.

There was a soldier, Cornelius by name, who wasn't a Jew but a Gentile, and who lived in a place called Cæsarea. Over in another city not very far away, called Joppa, lived

a man named Peter, a Jew. Peter was one of those who thought God didn't care for those other children of His called Gentiles. Cornelius was different from many Gentiles, for he believed that his heavenly Father did care for him, even if he wasn't a Jew, and he not only prayed to his heavenly Father, but he tried to help his Father's other children. He was terribly frightened one day because an angel came to him and said, "Cornelius, I have seen the good deeds you've done and I've heard your prayers. Now I want you to send to Joppa and get Peter." As soon as he could he called two of his servants and sent them with one of his soldiers to find Peter.

In the meantime Peter, in Joppa, had gone up on the roof of his house to pray. He used to do this every day. After he had finished praying and while he was very hungry, he fell asleep. And in his dream he saw a great sheet tied by the four corners let down from heaven. In it he saw all kinds of animals, not only those that Jews were allowed to eat, but some that they were forbidden to eat.

Peter thought he heard some one say, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." This happened three times. But Peter said, "I can't do that; I've never eaten anything that Jews are forbidden to eat." Then the voice said, "But, Peter, God says you can eat anything."

He hardly knew what to do, and while he was trying to think, the three men from Cornelius came to the door and asked for him. After the men had told him who they were and why they had come, he made them comfortable for the night, and the next day he started with them for Cornelius's house.

They found Cornelius waiting for them. At first Cornelius wanted to worship Peter as if he were a god, but Peter wouldn't let him. Then Peter said, "You know, Cornelius, I always thought the Jews were better than the Gentiles. I didn't think God cared for you Gentiles. But God has shown me that this isn't so. He has made me



see that all people are His children and that He cares for all of them, not merely for a few who are called Jews." This was God's way of teaching Peter and the rest of us that He is no respecter of persons, but that all people everywhere are His children and that He wants every child of His to know that He does care for him. This is what Jesus meant when He told His disciples that they should go into all the world and preach the Gospel to everybody. This is why William Carey wanted to go to India to tell God's children out there that their heavenly Father did care. This is the reason why we ought to be interested in these other children of our heavenly Father—they are His children and He loves them just as much as He loves any one of us.

## XXXVI

### THE BIBLE

THERE was once an auction sale of books and one man gave \$50,000 for one volume. It was one of the first books ever printed from type and what book do you suppose they chose for that honor? The Bible, of course. But the Bible is not only a curious and costly book; it is the book that is found in more places than any other book. You get a room in a hotel and you find it on the bureau; you go into a lawyer's office, and there it is; it is in every court-room, in all the hospitals, it's everywhere.

Now in the olden times Bibles were very scarce. They weren't printed, but each one was made by hand. A man printed the words on sheepskin. Of course such a book was too costly to be in people's houses; usually it was kept in the church. If you wanted to read it you had to go to the church.

That was the way it was in the days of King Joash. People had gotten tired of going to church and had forgotten about the Bible in the church. Little by little the walls had fallen down, rubbish had gathered in the place, and the Bible was lost in all the refuse.

But Joash was a good king. He thought people ought to go to church. So he set men to work cleaning out the rubbish and putting the church in order. One day underneath a lot of old stuff they found a curious book. Everybody seemed to have forgotten about the Bible, for they didn't know what the book was. Even the king didn't know there was such a book, and he, too, was surprised. So he called some of his wisest men and gave them the book; then he asked them to read it and again he was astonished when he learned that it told about God, and what He wanted

people to do. The king had it read to the people and very soon it was a new and better community, because the people tried to do what God in the Bible asked them to do.

Now, do you know we treat the Bible very often just as those people did? We forget about it. It is in our homes, but it gets covered up with other things. Not really covered up; I don't mean that we take other things and pile them on top of the Bible and hide it in that way. But we might just as well do it that way, for we let the other things interfere with the Bible. Maybe it's our pretty clothes, or Sunday newspapers, or games and other books. It is just as if all the things were piled on top of the Bible so that we can't see it and very soon we forget about it.

And what a wonderful book it is! What interesting stories are in it! There's that one about the trees in Judges 9:8; and the story of a shipwreck in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts. What a sad story that is about Job and what a wonderful woman Queen Esther was; and none of us can forget Samson and David.

But we ought not to be content merely to read the Bible; we must do what it asks us to do. It wouldn't do us much good just to see a fine meal spread out before us; we must eat it to get any good out of it. A wise man said, "Be ye *doers* of the word, and not *hearers* only."

Two little girls were on their way to school and while they were walking along they heard the bell ring. That meant they were in danger of being late, which meant that both of them would be kept in after school. One of them said, "Let's stop and ask the Lord to keep us from being late." "No," said the other. "Don't let's do that; let's skip right along and pray as we go." She believed in praying, but she wanted to do all she could herself. So, too, we must not be content with reading the Bible, we must do what it tells us to do.

## JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

THE great hero of the Boer War in South Africa was Lord Roberts. Everybody had read about his skill in overcoming the enemy and winning the war. He is to the English people what General Grant is to us. People like to see such a man. One time when I was in Edinburgh I heard that Lord Roberts was in the city and that he would worship at St. Giles's Church on Sunday. My little boy was with me and I was especially anxious that he should see the great general, so that he could remember him and tell his children that he had seen him.

So when Sunday morning came we climbed the hill to St. Giles's, starting early because we thought there might be a crowd. Well, there was. When we got up where we could see the church it looked to us as if everybody else in Edinburgh wanted to see Lord Roberts. We couldn't get anywhere near the church, and at last we had to come away without seeing him.

How the people must have crowded to see George Washington! We read that as he passed through cities, as he traveled over the country, mothers would hold up their babies for him to kiss: they wanted to be able to say always that the great President had touched their children; they wanted their children to be able to say always that they had seen General Washington.

So it was with Jesus. One time He was passing through a town and a great crowd had gathered to see Him, because they had heard what a wonderful man He was. There was a little man in the village who was very anxious to see Him, but he was so small he was afraid he couldn't see over the heads of the people who got in front of him. So running

ahead on one of the streets through which Jesus was going to walk, he climbed into a tree and then he saw Him.

Among others who wanted to see Jesus one time were some mothers, who had their babies with them. He was a wonderful man and they were anxious that their children should be able to say that they, too, had seen Jesus and that Jesus had touched them. No doubt the mothers had told the children stories of what Jesus had been doing; how He healed the sick and fed the hungry, and the children themselves, those who were old enough, must have been eager to see Him.

Well, one day these mothers, and fathers, too, heard that Jesus was actually in the village. How they must have talked about it! If only they could get Him to put His hands on the boys and girls, just to touch them, and maybe make one of His wonderful prayers for them, what a joy it would be! I imagine they dressed in their best clothes before they started to look for Jesus. How many of them there were I don't know, but there they went to find Jesus.

But what a disappointment! There's a big crowd of men and women there already and Jesus is talking to them. Some of them are sick and He is curing their sickness. Then one mother says, "I think that is Peter over there; he is a close friend of Jesus, and that's Andrew. Let's ask them to tell Jesus we want Him to touch our children." And so one of them, I think it must have been a father, tells Peter and Andrew what they want. But these two men don't think there's any use in disturbing Jesus now, for He's busy with grown folk. Then the mothers join in, and the talk gets louder, until finally Jesus either hears them or sees them and He wants to know what it is all about. I suppose Peter would say, "Why, there are some women here who want you to touch their children and we've told them that you don't want to be bothered." Jesus doesn't like that. He doesn't get angry very often, but He is angry now, and He tells the disciples not to try to keep them away from Him.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me," He says, "and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." And He lets them come close to Him. Then He doesn't merely touch them, but He takes them up in His arms one by one and blesses them. How He loved little children! He told the big people one time that unless they grew to be like little children they could not enter into the Kingdom of God at all.

Jesus loved little children! He was like the good Bishop who, tired out, went to his room to rest and gave orders that he was not to be disturbed, even if the King of France called. "But," he added, "if a little child knocks, call me." And how the little children loved Jesus and love Him still! One day a missionary in India was giving a stereopticon lecture on Christ's life and he had come to the picture of Christ with the little children. The picture showed Him putting His hand on the head of a little Indian beside Him. Suddenly a tiny brown girl ran innocently out of the crowd and right against the picture. She wanted to be near Him, too.

May we go to Him and have Him put His hand on us and bless us.

## XXXVIII

### SUNDAY

AN army was on the march. The men had tramped a long way. The music had helped a good deal, but now they were tired out, and their feet smarted and ached. As they were passing through a fine piece of woods near a cool spring the command came, "Halt! Fall out!" and the soldiers knew the march was over for the day and they could rest. How they rushed to the spring for a cool drink! How they stretched out on the grass by the roadside in the welcome shade of the trees! The colonel knew that they would be all the better for the rest and that they would do better the next day.

Every one who carries a watch knows that after a couple of years the watch begins to be slow, or stops unexpectedly. When you take it to the jeweler he puts that little spyglass on his eye and looks into the works, and usually he says, "You'll have to leave it here to be cleaned." And so the watch isn't wound at night, but is left with the jeweler for a rest, while it is being cleaned, and when it comes back it runs correctly and is a better watch.

Well, people are like an army on the march, or like a watch that has been running for some time. We can't go on forever, we have to stop and rest, we need to be cleaned up.

God knew that we, His children, would need rest and cleansing, so He arranged that we should keep going for six days and then He added one day for us to rest. We call it Sabbath or Sunday. He didn't give us seven days at first, and then change His mind and take one day away from us; but He gave us six days and then, in great kindness, knowing how much we would need to rest, He gave us another day, an extra day, for that. It was His gift to His children.



One time a great nation didn't want to acknowledge that the day of rest was God's gift. A law was passed that men should rest one day out of every ten instead of one out of every seven. After these people had tried it awhile, they found that God knew how much rest His children needed, and they went back to resting every seventh day.

How careful we are of anything a friend gives to us! We don't like to have anyone hurt it. We take better care of it than we do of something we have bought ourselves. And when the gift is from a father who loves us, how careful of it we are! That's the way we ought to treat this wonderful gift of a day every week which our heavenly Father has made to us, His children. We ought to treat that day as a precious thing and not spoil it or neglect it, or make it just like the other six days. Our Father said, when He made us this gift, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and He meant by that just what I've been telling you about taking care of a precious gift.

One way to find out what we ought to do with this precious gift of a day is to find out from the Bible what Jesus did with it when He was here on the earth, for the Father who gave it was His Father, too. We find that Jesus went to church on the Sabbath, and that He tried to do somebody some good on the Sabbath; if we follow His example we are pretty sure to use our gift in the right way.

Of course, our heavenly Father could have told us just what we could do and exactly what we couldn't do on Sunday. He could have arranged it so that if we broke one of His rules about Sunday we would at once be punished. But He didn't do that way. He said, rather, "You are my children; I love you and I will trust you to take good care of my gift." So He lets us do what we please with it. He wants us to use it aright because we love Him.

One time a boy was going away from home. His father took him out walking. They went through the old orchard where the boy had often gathered apples; they walked through

the fragrant hayfield where he had worked hard on hot summer days; they passed over the brook, where he had played many a time; and, last of all, they went into the sweet-smelling old barn and looked at the horses and cows. Then they walked back to the house and all the father said was, "Son, you are going away from home; do as you have a mind to."

I think God did something like that with Sunday; He gave it to us out of His great love and He trusts us to use it as the precious gift that it is.

## XXXIX

### THE SPEECH THAT NEVER WAS DELIVERED

I HAVE a speech which, though it is forty years old, has never been delivered. It is the speech which, when I was a boy in high school, I intended to give if I were ever invited to address that school. We used to have frequent visitors who, we thought, were rather old fogies, and who were continually giving us good advice; they kept telling us that we must think of the future, that we were preparing for after life, that we were forming habits which would make or mar us. I resolved that when I grew up and was invited to speak I should astonish both teachers and scholars by telling the boys and girls to have a good time now, and that the future would look after itself. That was the speech I was going to make.

But when my time came, and I was invited to address the boys and girls in my old school, I found I couldn't use that speech. I found myself talking just as those old fossils had talked forty years ago, and saying just about the same things that they said.

For when I looked over my proposed speech and tried to test it by experience, I didn't dare deliver it. I tried to find some illustrations which would show that what I intended to say was true. I wanted to find some boys who had lived as I thought I should advise them to live, and I found two or three, but they were not very helpful. It would never do to tell boys and girls to do as they had done. Here was a boy, now a grown man, who had lived up to the theory which I intended to offer, but he was busy looking for a job. Here was another boy, now over forty years of age,

who likewise had adopted the theory, and he was standing on the street corner hoping, or rather not hoping, that some one would employ him.

Yes, all the illustrations confirmed the statements of the old fogies. I found a man successfully managing a large department of a big office. They told me that when he came there as a green boy, everybody made fun of him. The other clerks once gave him a letter to carry from lower Broadway to a store on Canal Street and wait for an answer. The note asked the proprietor of the hardware store to deliver a grindstone to the boy. The boy took the stone and rolled it all the way down Broadway and delivered it to his tormentors. How could you keep such a boy down?

One time I got positions for two boys of about the same age. Some time afterwards one morning when the telephone in my office rang, the operator said somebody in the police station wanted to talk to me. I asked who it was and there was one of those boys asking me to come up and get him out. He had been out the night before with some hoodlums, and had been arrested, and there he was. I found that if he happened to get down to his office a few minutes before eight, the time he was expected to begin, he would stand round outside smoking cigarettes. His time was eight o'clock and he wasn't going to begin a minute sooner. No wonder he was in jail.

A few days later I had a call from the other young man. He told me that he had gotten married and that he had been given an interest in the business. I heard later that one winter's day, when there was a severe blizzard, he was the only one who got to the office. "How did you do it?" I asked him. "Why," he said, "I saw when I went to bed there was going to be a heavy snowstorm, so I got up at three o'clock and went to the office." He beat the blizzard.

I am telling you this because some of you are planning to make that same speech I was planning to make, and I want to save you the trouble of preparing it, for you will never

deliver it. Time and experience will make it useless. You will be compelled to say the same things we old fellows say: Youth is the time of preparation, get ready now, form habits now—your future will be what you make it.

## XL

### DOING NOTHING

"WHAT a man is depends very largely on what he does when he has nothing to do." That is, you can tell what kind of a man he is by what he does when he is free to do as he pleases. I don't remember where I read that impressive statement, but it is a striking illustration of a truth found in the boyhood of Jesus. He had gone with His parents to the feast at Jerusalem and when the ceremonies ended Jesus was free. He had nothing to do. His parents thought He was lost. What He did showed what He was: He sought the temple, His Father's house, and discussed with the learned men the great problems which were seething in His own mind.

I knew another boy whose parents thought he was lost. He was at college and they hadn't heard from him for some time, so his old father went to the college town to find him. He met one of his son's classmates, who said he would help him find the boy, and then he took the old man through one saloon after another, for he knew what the boy would do when he was free to do as he pleased; and what that boy did when he had nothing to do showed the kind of a boy he was.

And this is always true. Some one has put it in this way: "You cannot always tell from the things a man is compelled to do for a living what his real character is, what his tastes and inclinations are. It is his voluntary choices, what he chooses when he is free to choose; what he does when he is at liberty to do as he will—these are the things that indicate the quality of the individual."

Others have expressed the same truth by saying that if you want to know what a man is you must know the kind of air castles he builds, for morals are made in leisure time.

The history of mankind verifies this truth. Henry Clay, the great orator, went out into the barnyard and declaimed to the horses and cows; Napoleon, as a boy, used his free time to train his playmates as soldiers; Lincoln, after the chores were finished, stretched out before the fire and read history; Edison, when a newsboy on the train, rigged up a workbench in the baggage car so he could experiment with electricity.

There are two or three suggestions which come out of the truth—what a man is depends very largely on what he does when he has nothing to do.

*First: Cultivate the habit of thinking about the right kind of things.* When you have nothing to do, you think. What do you think about after you have gone to bed and before you fall asleep, and when you wake in the morning and before you get up? What do you think about in your idle moments? "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Thoughts are like dyestuff and give color to one's character. Speer tells us of his last call upon Major Whittle as he lay on his deathbed. "I asked him how he spent all those weary hours in his bed. He said it was not possible for him to write any more, he was just depending on what was in his memory and what his friends would say to him. He could not sleep much after midnight. He would wake then and begin to think about Christ. He would think about all the Old Testament types and prophecies, of all the sweet things Jesus said, the loving things Jesus did when He was here; and of that day when the eastern sky shall grow ruddy with the glory of His coming. He asked me what thought had come to me that day that was specially helpful. I told him I had been thinking what a great thing it would be if every time a man's mind was free to go to its own place, when all the constraints of objective duty and pleasure were removed, it would just naturally fall in upon Christ, so that Jesus Christ really became the master of all our thoughts."

Paul no doubt had some such idea in his mind when he



wrote: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."

This is one reason why memorizing portions of Scripture is helpful; it gives us something good to think about.

*Second: Cultivate the habit of using scraps of time.* "Tell me how a young man uses his little ragged edges of time after his day's work is done, during the long winter evenings, what is revolving in his mind at every opportunity, and I will tell you what that young man's future will be."

Have some good book handy, so that broken bits of time need not be wasted. Have your Bible study material at hand so that you can turn to it readily. Have a worth-while hobby ready to occupy your thoughts.

*Third: Try to realize the everlasting importance of the truth that the things you do day by day when you have nothing to do are the things that are forming your character.* Phillips Brooks in his sermon on being judged by the law of liberty (James 2:12), stated the principle in most impressive words when he said:

"By this law we shall be judged. How simple and sublime it makes the judgment day! We stand before the great white throne and wait our verdict. We watch the closed lips of the Eternal Judge, and our hearts stand still until those lips shall open and pronounce our fate; heaven or hell. The lips do not open. The Judge just lifts His hand and raises from each soul before Him every law of constraint whose pressure has been its education. He lifts the laws of constraint and their results are manifest. The real intrinsic nature of each soul leaps to the surface. Each soul's law of liberty becomes supreme. And each soul, without one word of condemnation or approval by its own inner tendency, seeks its own place. They turn and separate, father from child, brother from brother, wife from husband, each with the old habitual restrictions lifted off, turns to his own; one by the inner power to the right, another by a like power to the left; these up to heaven, and these down to hell. Do we need more?"

"It needs no word, no smile, no frown. The freeing of

souls is the judging of souls. A liberated nature dictates its own destiny. Could there be a more solemn judgment seat?

"Is it not a fearful thing to be judged by the law of liberty?"

And so I repeat—

*What a man is depends very largely upon what he does when he has nothing to do.*

## XLI

### JESUS JUDGED BY HIS DISCIPLES

It is the last night of Jesus' earthly life. He has been brought before the high priest to be examined. His enemies are trying with all their might to find something wrong with Him. They have already made up their minds to have Him crucified, but they want to appear to be right in doing it. As He stands there before the religious leaders of His people, John tells us that the high priest "asked Jesus of His disciples" (John 18:19). A good many unfair questions must have been asked that night, but this was a fair one: "What has your teaching done for the men who have been with you? What is the result of your work?" This was fair. It is a fair test of a school, or a machine, or a home, or a religion, or anything. Tell me what kind of boys come out of a school and I will tell you what kind of a school it is. Nobody ever buys a machine without first knowing what kind of work is turned out by the machine. And this is just as true of religion. What kind of men does it make? And so Caiaphas was justified in asking Jesus about His disciples.

And people are justified in asking that question still of our churches and our Sunday schools. What kind of a boy does that Sunday school turn out? It is the way Sunday school boys live and act that tells us what kind of a Sunday school it is. And not only that—the Sunday school is a place where we learn what the Christian religion is, and usually the Sunday school does its work all right; so people are justified in looking at us, boys and girls of the Christian Church, to learn what Christianity is. Men do not set their watches by the sun, though the sun sets the time of the world. They set their watches by some clock whose owner has set it by the sun. Many people do not look to Jesus or the Bible to find out what Christianity is; they look at those of us who

profess to be living in accordance with the principles laid down in the Bible. Like the high priest they still ask about Jesus' disciples, that is, about you and me.

Dr. Sidney Gulick tells about some factory girls with whom he had worked in Japan, and who had become Christians; and he says, "Through the changed character and intelligence of the girls, many villages from whence they had come have changed their attitude towards Christianity." And again, "In view of the reformed character of the man who had been an inveterate drunkard, but who was now a sober and useful citizen, his townsmen began to recognize the moral power of Christianity." What kind of people does Christianity make? That is the way to judge of its merits.

The trouble is, we forget how people are watching us. And it is too often true of us as it was of the Christians in Rome to whom Paul wrote, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." I was telling a business man that another business man with whom he had some trouble was a Sunday school superintendent and he exclaimed, "Well, I'm sorry for the church!" *The Congregationalist* printed a story which reproduced part of a letter written by a woman to some of her relatives, in which she said, "We have had a glorious revival of religion. Charles and I have been hopelessly converted. Father has gotten very old and helpless, so we have sent him to the poorhouse." What kind of an idea of Christianity would anyone get from seeing these disciples putting their poor old father in the poorhouse?

Jesus is never afraid to have His religion tested by the results. He answered the high priest's questions by saying, "Ask them." What He meant was, "Watch them; see what my religion has done for them." The high priest wouldn't have gotten a very good idea of the Christian religion from seeing Peter that night, as with cursing and swearing he declared that he never knew the man; but Peter came back. If he could have seen Paul he would have bowed down in admiration. But people are not looking at Paul and Peter

today; they are watching you and me—watching very often when we don't know it.

The wife of the conductor on a suburban train died after a long illness. A few days after the funeral a stranger came to the home of the conductor and said, "You don't know me, but I've been riding on your train. I knew you had a sick wife and I came here to the funeral. I've been watching you; you've got something I haven't got and I want to know what it is." Then the conductor told him that he was a Christian and that it was the love of God in his heart that had enabled him to bear his loss and sorrow; it was because he knew that all was well that he could bear up under his heavy burden. He was the kind of disciple that Jesus was willing to be judged by.

I once heard Dr. McKenzie of Cambridge describe our Lord's last interview with Peter in the following words:

"Simon, do you love me enough to do anything just because you love me?" "Yes, Lord, I do." Then Jesus said, "Simon, I have died for the world, and the world does not know it. Do you see those sheep? They are my sheep. I have been feeding them and now I am going out of the world; Simon, will you take care of those sheep?" "Yes, Lord." "I shall depend upon you, Simon; those sheep will starve to death if you do not feed them. I shall not make any other provision." "But, Lord, what is John going to do?" "No matter about John, Simon, will you feed those sheep, there on the hillside?" "Yes, Lord, I will."

Then Jesus went to heaven with no more anxiety; and if when He reached heaven some archangel had said, "Son of God, thou didst die for the world, does the world know it?" He would have replied, "Scarcely anyone." "What arrangements have you made?" "Simon said he would go and tell the world that I have died." "And you trusted Simon?" "Yes." "But, Lord, you might as well never have left heaven if Simon fails you." "I know it. I have staked all on Simon, son of Jonas; I depend upon him."

Jesus depends on us. He is willing that His religion should be judged by us. How are we meeting that wonderful honor?

## JESUS IN JERUSALEM

ONE day when I was a small boy my father asked me if I should like to go to Washington with him. What do you think I said? Of course I was glad to go. So away we started. It was a wonderful journey. I had never been on a sleeping car before and when I saw the colored man change the seats into beds it seemed wonderful. After I got into bed how strange it was to lie there and look out of the window and see the lights flash by, and to think that all the time I was in bed! When I got to Washington, the capital of our country, what wonderful sights we saw! There was the patent office where I saw locomotives, engines, bridges, and all sorts of machinery made so small you could play with them, but just like the real things. And the Treasury building with all its money! There a man told me I could have a big bag of gold, but when I tried to take it I couldn't lift it. I remember how the older people laughed. We went into one room and a man let me hold in my hand a package which had \$3,000,000 in it—think of it, \$3,000,000! I nearly fell over. How glad I was to see and do all these wonderful things!

So it was in the olden times when the people in Palestine went up to the capital of their country, where the wonderful temple was. They had a song which began, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Jesus as a boy had often been told about Jerusalem and how the people went up there every year. At last a day came when His father asked Him to go with His mother and him. How glad He must have been—what wonderful things He expected to see! Of course He didn't go on a train; I rather think He walked, although it was a long journey.



And when He reached the city there was the beautiful temple, of which He had heard so much. Everywhere men and women, boys and girls were celebrating the feast of the Passover.

But at last this was over, and they all started back home. The first part of the journey there must have been a big crowd, which gradually thinned out, as one family after another took one of the branch roads leading to its part of the country. Joseph and Mary thought Jesus was somewhere in the party; it was like a big picnic, and the people would change companions every now and then. But after they had been gone two days and must have been getting pretty near home, they looked for Jesus and couldn't find Him. They inquired among their friends, but no one remembered having seen Him since they left Jerusalem.

I know how I would have felt if my father had started home from Washington without me. One day on that visit he wanted me to go to the children's table in the hotel, but I wouldn't go because I was afraid to be left alone with strangers.

After trudging all the way back to Jerusalem, and looking everywhere for Him, Mary and Joseph at last looked in the temple and there they found Jesus, sitting quite unafraid, with a lot of ministers and teachers around Him, asking them questions and answering the questions they put to Him. His mother said, "We've looked everywhere for you; we thought you were lost. Why did you treat us this way?"

Jesus was surprised and could only say, "Why, Mother, didn't you know where to look for me? Where else should I be but in my Father's house?"

If you could go anywhere you pleased, where would your father and mother be most likely to look for you?



## XLIII

### LOVING GIFTS

WHAT would you think of something that somebody had done that was remembered for nearly two thousand years? Can you remember what you did two years ago, or three, or four? You see, we forget very easily. Well, here is something that has been remembered for almost two thousand years, and will be remembered for two thousand years more, if this old world lasts that long—a woman made a present to Jesus! And people have been talking about it ever since.

They were having a dinner party in Simon's house in Bethany, and two sisters, Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus had been invited with Jesus. The brother and his sisters lived in Bethany, and their home was really the only home Jesus had during the last years of His life. He loved to go there and they loved to have Him. Jesus had done a wonderful thing for them—Lazarus had died, and Jesus had brought him to life again. So they loved Jesus very, very much.

Whenever a guest came into one of those houses, the host didn't say, as we do, "Would you like to go upstairs and wash your hands?" for usually there wasn't any upstairs. It was the custom then for people to wash their feet. This was because they wore sandals, which covered only the bottom of the feet. So, usually, jars of water stood by the doorway. Here the guest would sit down, while a servant came with a basin, and, after taking off the sandals, bathed the feet with cool water and wiped them with a towel.

Mary had brought with her to the party a little bottle of perfume, probably her greatest treasure. The story says it was expensive—partly, I suppose, because it was so precious, and partly because the bottle was made of alabaster. While

they were at dinner, not sitting in chairs as we do but lying on couches, with their sandals off, Mary broke this beautiful bottle—there was no other way of opening it—and poured the fragrant perfume on Jesus' feet. Then she dried them with her long hair. Because she loved him she gave him the best thing she had! Jesus was surprised and pleased and said, "Whenever people tell about me they will mention this beautiful thing that Mary has done." And here we are, telling about it nearly two thousand years after.

Yes, we show our love by giving. Mother goes shopping and all the time she is thinking of the children at home. She is pretty sure to bring back something for John and Mary and Ned. A birthday comes along and we like to make a gift to our friend. There is a war when our country needs to be defended—and our young men rush to give themselves to show their love.

## XLIV

### UNSEEN HELPERS

THERE are lots of things we can't see. Did you ever know that there are a comb and brush on the leg of every wasp? Probably not, but there are. You get a microscope some time and look at the wasp's leg and you will see them. Just because we can't see a thing doesn't mean it isn't there.

I was walking past a store window one day, around which a crowd had gathered. I looked in to see what the people were looking at. On a flat disk a lot of little images were moving about as if they were alive. I wondered at first how it was done, what made them move, and then I saw that underneath was a magnet and the images followed it as clockwork moved it about. I couldn't see the magnetism, but it was there just the same.

One time some hunters came out on a hillside and looked down into the valley. A strange sight met their eyes. Down there lying on the ground near a pool of water were a number of animals—deer, bears, and others. They thought they couldn't be asleep, yet they were very quiet. When the hunters were near enough they saw that the animals were dead, every one of them. Then they began to wonder what had killed them. No hunter could have shot them; and they didn't seem to be hurt. The men started to go to them; but they soon found out what it was that had killed the animals. A poisonous gas had come up out of the ground, and because it was heavier than air it had settled down on the earth. When the animals came to the pool to drink, the gas killed them. They couldn't see it; the men couldn't see it; but it was there just the same.

Yes, there are a great many things we can't see. I'm sure you can think of some besides the ones I've mentioned.

Once upon a time a wicked king was trying to catch an old prophet named Elisha, who had gone into a certain city. After Elisha had gone to bed this wicked king came with his soldiers and put them all around the city, so that no one could get out without being seen. In the morning when Elisha's servant got up and went out of doors, he saw everywhere these soldiers with their chariots and horses, and he ran into the house frightened nearly to death and called out, "Master, Master, what shall we do? The king has put his soldiers all round the city and how can we get away from him?" Can't you imagine the old man coming out and looking down on the soldiers, and with a smile on his face saying to his servant, "There, there, don't be frightened. There are a good many of the king's soldiers down there, to be sure, but they that are with us are more than they that are with them."

How surprised the servant must have been! We can imagine that he said, "More with us than all them! Why, there are only two of us and there are thousands of them; what can my Master mean?"

Elisha saw that the servant didn't understand, so he prayed to his God, the God in whom he trusted, and said, "Lord, open this man's eyes so that he may see."

At once God answered his prayer; the servant's eyes were opened, and when he looked the whole place seemed to be full of horses and chariots of fire. They were there all the time, only he couldn't see them, for the Bible says, "The angel of the Lord campeth round about them that fear him."

So we may be sure that God is near us even if we can't see Him. We must be like Elisha—trust Him, have faith in Him, and He will surely help us.

## SEEKING AND FINDING

DID you ever try to find something that you wanted very much? One time it became known that there was gold in far-off Alaska, and although that part of Alaska is a cold, hard country, where there is little to eat and no place to live, great crowds of men tramped over the snow and ice seeking gold. Lots of them died there but still others rushed after the precious metal. They wanted the gold so much that they were willing to risk their lives for it.

How sick people do search for health! Some of you have read the beautiful stories Robert Louis Stevenson wrote. All his life he was a sick man and in seeking health he went pretty much all over the world till finally he lived on an island away out in the Pacific Ocean. He wanted health and he sought it everywhere.

Yes, when anybody wants something very much he seeks earnestly for it.

One time one of the old prophets, speaking for God, said to the people, "Seek ye me and ye shall live." He knew that the people were sick—sick not in their bodies but in their hearts, for they had sinned, and sin is sickness. Now God tells us that the way to get well, to get rid of our sickness, our sin, is to seek Him. "Seek ye me and ye shall live."

And He wants us to seek Him now, while we are young, for it is better to keep well than to look for health after we are ill. It is better never to sin than to sin and then seek God's forgiveness.

But you say, "How can we seek God?" Well, first, of course, by prayer. Talk to Him; tell Him how much you need His strength to keep you from doing wrong, and He surely will give it.

Then you can find out what God wants you to do by reading the Bible. You seek God by reading and thinking about what He has said in that wonderful book.

And, of course, if you talk with God and seek His help in prayer, and read what He has said in the Bible, you ought to live as you find He wants you to live. That is seeking God—doing what God wants you to do.

I have read somewhere that a drop of muddy water in a black puddle was ashamed of all the filth and called out, "Oh, I wish I could get away from all this dirt!" "Well," said the breeze, "why not? Ask the sun, he's big and strong." "But," the drop said, "the sun is so far away." "No," said the breeze, "his rays are all around you; can't you feel them?" "But the sun is so big and I'm so little," said the drop. "Yes," answered the breeze again, "the sun is big and you are little, but that won't make any difference to him." "Oh, I'd like to ask him, but I'm so black and dirty; the sun is pure and beautiful, he'd never do anything for me," complained the drop. "Never mind that; ask him." So the muddy drop asked the great, strong, clean sun to lift him out of the dirty puddle and he did it. Up and up the drop went, drawn by the sun's heat, until he became part of a cloud, and then he fell back to the earth as a raindrop, and dwelt in a clean sweet spring.

If we seek God He will lift us up and make us sweet and clean and pure.







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